

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRAY FOR REIGN  
THE ESCHATOLOGICAL ELIJAH  
IN JAMES 5:17-18

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For Sandy—till we meet again in the reign

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations not listed follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (eds. Patrick H. Alexander, et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

AAA.A	Acta Academie Aboensis, Series A
ACEBT	<i>Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie</i>
ATDA	Das Alte Testament Deutsch Apokryphen
DSSSE	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition</i> . By Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998.
FGNK	<i>Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur</i>
GTB	Gütersloher Tachenbücher
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JVG	<i>Jesus and the Victory of God</i> . By N. T. Wright. Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 2. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies. Formerly JSNTS (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series).
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title</i> . Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright, eds. Provisional ed. Oxford: Oxford UP [forthcoming]. Cited 14 February 2007. Online: <a href="http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/">http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/</a> . Also <i>Psalms: A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title</i> . Translated by Albert Pietersma. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
NTPG	<i>New Testament and the People of God</i> . By N. T. Wright. Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 1. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
NTR	New Testament Readings
OG	Old Greek
PBTM	Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs
Pillar	Pillar New Testament Commentaries
SBFA	Studii Biblici Franciscani Analecta

<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SSLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics
TH	Theodotion
<i>TRENT</i>	<i>Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament</i> . 6 vols. By David Instone-Brewer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004–.
YJS	Yale Judaica Series

## ABSTRACT

James uses the prophet Elijah as an example of righteous prayer. This thesis explores the possibility that James may have intended his readers to recognize both historical *and* eschatological imagery associated with the biblical prophet. First, it shows that in early Jewish literature the eschatological and historical Elijah traditions were not held in isolation of each other. Imagery from descriptions of Elijah's eschatological return is used to describe the pre-ascension ministry of the prophet, while the eschatological mission of the prophet is described using elements of the historical narrative. Second, the thesis demonstrates that James' prescript "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion," sets a tone of inaugurated and yet-to-be-consumated eschatology, and that the mention of Elijah helps form an eschatological *inclusio* that frames the letter. Third, the New Testament use of Elijah's drought outside of James is explored showing again that elements from the Elijah's drought in 1 Kings were used in eschatological contexts, and that Elijah's three and a half year drought, as mentioned by James, is used to illustrate a period of judgment for the sake of effecting repentance in these contexts. Fourth and finally, the images of rain and drought are viewed through an eschatological lens, revealing their role as covenant blessing and curse, and eschatological judgment and restoration. It is concluded that James' readers could have recognized the eschatological implications of using Elijah as an example of faithful, righteous prayer, and that James assigns his readers a role similar to that of the eschatological prophet. They are called to endure in the midst of eschatological trials and to effect repentance before the arrival of the soon-coming King.



## Introduction

Elijah the prophet sparked both the expectation and imagination of first century Jews and Christians. As the prophet *par excellence*, Elijah's ministry (1 Kings 17–19; 21:17–29; 2 Kings 1:2–16; 2:1–12) served as a typological palette to paint the prophetic ministries of Jesus, his disciples and his cousin John.<sup>1</sup> In the Synoptic Gospels, John the Baptist is identified with the eschatological Elijah (Mal 4:5–6 [MT 3:23–24; LXX 3:22–23]).<sup>2</sup> In Luke, Jesus compares his own ministry to Elijah's and Elisha's (Luke 4:25–27), and his healing of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11–17) mirrors the healing of the widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:8–16).<sup>3</sup> Luke even patterns the ascension of Jesus and the subsequent ministry of the disciples after the prophet's ascension and Elisha's subsequent ministry.<sup>4</sup> The use of the Elijah narrative is not limited to Luke-Acts. For Paul, God's declaration to Elijah at Horeb (1 Kgs 19:10–18), provided assurance that he would raise “a remnant, chosen by grace” (NRSV

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<sup>1</sup> Leonhard Goppelt notes that “the evangelists have emphasized Jesus' relationship to redemptive history by alluding to the appropriate Old Testament stories [of the prophets] and by quoting suitable prophecies” (*Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* [trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 62; see pp. 61–82 on the typological use of Old Testament prophets to describe Jesus' ministry).

<sup>2</sup> See Mark 1:2–3; Matt 10:11; 11:14; 17:10–13; Luke 1:17; 7:27. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist denies this association (1:21, 27). Luke does not state that John is literally Elijah, but rather that he comes “in the Spirit and power of Elijah” (1:17). The commonly held notion that Elijah was expected as a precursor to the Messiah has been challenged. M. Faierstein, “Why do the Scribes Say that Elijah Must Come First,” *JBL* 100 (1981): 75–86; Dale C. Allison, Jr. defends the early Jewish provenance of Elijah as messianic forerunner. See his “Elijah Must Come First,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 256–258; Joseph A. Fitzmyer offers a rebuttal to Allison in his article, “More about Elijah Coming First,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 295–296.

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion of Luke 4:25–27 below. On the similarities between Jesus and Elijah, see Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke the Literary Interpreter: Luke-Acts as a Systematic Rewriting and Updating of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative in 1 and 2 Kings” (PhD diss., Pontifical University of St. Thomas. Rome, 1981); Craig A. Evans, “Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 75–83; J. Severino Croatto, “Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses in Luke-Acts,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 451–465.

<sup>4</sup> The prophetic mantle is passed to Elisha, who witnesses Elijah's ascension and receives a double portion of his spirit (2 Kgs 2). Jesus commissions his disciples, who witness his ascension as they are promised to receive the Holy Spirit and to be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–9). Some elements of Jesus' ministry bare a greater similarity to Elisha than to Elijah (Raymond E. Brown, “Jesus and Elisha,” *Perspective* 12 [1971]: 85–104; D. Gerald Bostock, “Jesus as the New Elisha,” *ExpT* 92 [1980]: 39–41; Thomas L. Brodie, “Jesus as the New Elisha: Cracking the Code,” *ExpT* 93 [1981]: 39–42).

Rom 11:2–5).<sup>5</sup> Finally, at the end of the New Testament, the judgments wrought by both Elijah and Moses serve as a model for the judgments initiated by the two witnesses (Rev 11:3–13; see below).

### ***The Historical Elijah in James***

Given the frequency with which Elijah is used as a historical exemplar and eschatological figure in the New Testament, it is no surprise that the Epistle of James uses his life to illustrate the “powerful and effective” prayer of the righteous:

Elijah was a man like us, and he fervently prayed that it might not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth for three years and six months. Again he prayed, and heaven gave rain and the earth produced its fruit. (Jas 5:17–18)

Ἡλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν, καὶ προσευχῇ προσηύξατο τοῦ μὴ βρέξει, καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἕξ· καὶ πάλιν προσηύξατο, καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν ἔδωκεν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς.

In light of the preceding context of prayer for healing (5:13–16), it is a surprise that James skips the more obvious example of Elijah’s successful prayer for the resuscitation of the widow’s son (1 Kgs 17:17–24) and instead focuses on the drought announced by the prophet (1 Kgs 17–18).<sup>6</sup> The details of the drought narrative provided by James are also seemingly odd, as they do not line up exactly with the explicit narrative of 1 Kings. James states, as a matter of fact, that Elijah prayed for drought and rain, when the Old Testament does not explicitly mention that Elijah prayed for either (1 Kgs 17:1; ch. 18). The Elijah cycle neither

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<sup>5</sup> Some have argued that Paul saw himself as an Elijah-like prophet (Osvaldo D. Vena, “Paul’s Understanding of the Eschatological Prophet of Malachi 4:5–6,” *BR* 44 [1999]: 35–54; N. T. Wright, “Paul, Arabia, and Elijah [Galatians 1:17],” *JBL* 115 [1996]: 683–692. Wright’s hypothesis is deemed “doubtful” by Roy E. Ciampa in *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2* [WUNT 2/106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 121–122, esp. n. 67). John Bowman argues that Paul derives his doctrine of the pre-existent Christ from Elijah, via Merkabah mysticism (“Elijah and the Pauline Jesus Christ,” *AbrN* 26 [1988]: 1–18).

<sup>6</sup> Sophie Laws, *The Epistle of James* (BNTC/HNTC 16; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1980), 235.

provides the details that the drought lasted for “three years and six months,” nor that the earth “bore fruit” (ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν) as a result of the rain.

These interpretive details have led some scholars to believe that James supplemented the biblical account with extrabiblical Jewish tradition.<sup>7</sup> Other scholars have concluded that James did not have access to biblical text at all. Wiard Popkes states that “Obviously James received his information from secondary sources . . . , not from direct access to 1 Kings 17–18.”<sup>8</sup> Popkes then boldly concludes:

James can hardly be called an *OT* exegete. He may call himself a ‘teacher’ (διδάσκαλος: 3.1f); but he is not really a ‘teacher of the Bible’. His knowledge of the Bible is second-hand. This pertains to his quotations as well as to the allusions and examples.<sup>9</sup>

This charge follows the lead of Martin Dibelius, who states that James’ knowledge of Scripture “could have come . . . as easily through propaganda, preaching, teaching, and instruction intended for catechumens or missionaries as through books.”<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to Dibelius and Popkes, James can certainly be considered an Old Testament exegete, and he is likely aware of the context of Elijah’s drought in the Old Testament. The assertion that Elijah prayed for both drought and rain may be justified based on the prophet’s two postures of prayer: “standing before the LORD” (1 Kgs 17:1) and sitting with “his face between his knees” (18:42).<sup>11</sup> The three and a half year duration of the

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<sup>7</sup> Peter H. Davids, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (eds. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans; JSPSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 228–245; idem “Tradition and Citation in the Epistle of James,” in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation* (eds. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 113–126; Richard Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 303–317.

<sup>8</sup> “James and Scripture: An Exercise in Intertextuality,” *NTS* 45 (1999): 228.

<sup>9</sup> “James and Scripture,” 228.

<sup>10</sup> *James* (rev. Heinrich Greeven; trans. Michael A. Williams; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 26.

<sup>11</sup> “Standing” is a regular posture of prayer. *Tg. Onq. Gen.* 18:22 interprets “he remained standing before the LORD” (עֹדֵנוּ עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה) as “he was ministering in his prayer before the LORD” (הוּא מְשַׁמֵּשׁ בְּצִלּוֹ קֹדֶם); see also *Tg. Onq. Gen.* 19:27; Ropes, 311). Commenting on Gen 19:27, R. Helbo (290–320 AD) in the name of R. Huna (250–290 AD) states that “‘standing’ means nothing else than prayer” (*b. Ber.* 6b; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 68.9; *Num.*

drought could have been derived from the fact that Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal occurred "after many days . . . in the third year" of the drought (18:1).<sup>12</sup> That the earth "bore fruit" could simply be inferred as a logical progression of the narrative. The lack of rain produced famine (1 Kgs 17:12; 18:2–6), and its return produced a harvest (Deut 11:13–17).<sup>13</sup>

That James alludes to Elijah's drought in the context of prayer, suffering, sickness and sin is wholly appropriate given the larger context of the Elijah cycle (1 Kgs 17–18). Elijah's drought could symbolize the dry spiritual condition or physical weakness of the believers, while the arrival of the rain and the fructification of the land could serve as analogs to the believer who has been restored, healed and forgiven.<sup>14</sup> The occasion for Elijah's drought is also appropriate for James' context. Elijah's oath served as a tactical strike against the wicked regime of Ahab, his wife Jezebel, and their state-sponsored worship of Baal.<sup>15</sup> Their infectious idolatry quickly spread throughout Israel, breeding a

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*Rab.* 2.1). Interestingly, this interpretation is derived from Ps 106:30, where Phinehas "stood and prayed" (לָלַחַם וּפָלַל), thus פָּלַל=עָמַד. In some strands of tradition Phinehas is said to be one and the same with Elijah—though certainly James does not make this identification (*L.A.B.* 48:1; see below). That Elijah prayed for rain could be inferred from Elijah's posture (his head between his knees) in 1 Kgs 18:42. Hanina ben Dosa (40–80 AD) prayed successfully for the healing of Johanan ben Zachai's son using the same posture (*b. Ber.* 34b). Note also the meturgeman's association of Elijah's prayer for fire with prayer for rain (*Tg. 1 Kgs.* 18:37).

<sup>12</sup> The duration of "three and a half years," while being justified by 1 Kgs 18:1, could still hold symbolic meaning in early Jewish contexts. See below.

<sup>13</sup> Note also that Elisha is plowing his family fields when Elijah appoints him as his successor, indicating that the rain had brought with it renewed crops (1 Kgs 19:19–21).

<sup>14</sup> Peter H. Davids, *Epistle of James* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 197; Dennis R. Edwards, "Reviving Faith: An Eschatological Understanding of James 5:13–20" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2003), 143; Patrick J. Hartin, *James* (SP 14. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 272; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 337; Ralph P. Martin, *James* (WBC 48; Waco, Texas: Word Book Publishers, 1988), 213.

<sup>15</sup> Baal served as the god of rain and fertility. See Fred E. Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics Against Baalism in the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1994), 95–113; James R. Battenfield, "YHWH's Refutation of the Baal Myth through the Actions of Elijah and Elisha" in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration* (ed. Avraham Gileadi; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 19–37; Leah Bronner, *The Stories of Elijah and Elisha as Polemics Against Baal Worship* (Pretoria Oriental Series 6; Leiden: Brill, 1968).

syncretistic worship of YHWH along with the gods of their pagan neighbors. This split loyalty spurred Elijah to accuse Israel of “limping with two different opinions” (18:21), a phrase similar in meaning to δίψυχος in James (1:8; 4:8).<sup>16</sup> The withholding of the rains revealed Baal’s impotence, while the contest at Mt. Carmel revealed his non-existence. At the prayer of Elijah, lightning struck fire descended the people repented, and shortly thereafter the rains returned (Jas 5:18; 1 Kgs 18:20–45).

That Elijah and the prophets faced the persecution of the rich Omrides (1 Kgs 18:4, 13) provides a further parallel with James, given the letter’s negative portrayal of the rich and their exploitation of the poor (5:1–6). Ahab and his father Omri were known for their entrepreneurial spirit, and even Ahab’s marriage to the pagan priestess Jezebel was forged for the sake of a lucrative treaty with Tyre (1 Kgs 16:29–34).<sup>17</sup> Elijah’s pronouncement of judgment and the subsequent drought not only proved YHWH’s supremacy over Baal, it also struck at the economic heart of the Omridic dynasty, causing even the king to search for water and feed for his livestock (1 Kgs 18:5).<sup>18</sup> The author of 1 Kings makes it plain that

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<sup>16</sup> In *Tg. 1 Kgs. 18:21*, Elijah asks Israel how long they will be “divided into two divisions” (פליגין לתרתין לתרין) (פליגין) between Baal and YHWH. The Peshitta uses the cognates *plgwn* and *plygyn*. In v. 37 Elijah concludes his prayer for fire from heaven *and rain*, explaining that Israel “gave their divided heart” (ואנן יהבו יהבין ית) (לבהון פליג). The phrase, “their divided heart” (לבהון פליג) bears a striking resemblance with the Syriac translation of James’ double-minded man in 1:8 – (‘yn’ dplyg br’ynh). The root “*plg*” is used for “divided” in both the Peshitta as the reflex of δίψυχος, and in the Targum to describe the “split” loyalties of Israel. While *lb* is not used for “heart” in the Peshitta, לב is rendered with רעו, a cognate of רעין, in *Tg. Onq. Gen 6:6*; *Tg. Onq. Num 16:28* and *24:13* (2x). See pages 118–122 in Craig E. Morrison, “Handing on the Mantle: The Transmission of the Elijah Cycle in the Biblical Versions,” in *Master of the Sacred Page* (eds. Keith J. Egan, et al.; Washington, D.C.: Carmelite Institute, 1997), 109–129. Morrison recognizes the similarities between James’ concept of double-mindedness and the condition of Israel on Carmel (see page 119), but he does not explore its significance for Elijah’s drought in 5:17–18.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Cohen paints the Omridic dynasty in a positive light, referring to Omri and Ahab as the David and Solomon of the Northern Kingdom (“In All Fairness to Ahab,” *Eretz-Israel* 12 [1975]: 87–94). C. F. Whitley states that the author of Kings has a theological agenda that intentionally overlooks the economic and political gains the Omrides made for the kingdom (“The Deuteronomist Presentation of the House of Omri” *VT* 2 [1952]: 137–152).

<sup>18</sup> There is a tragic irony in this passage. Ahab is concerned that his horses and donkeys will not perish (נכרית) in the drought (18:5), while Jezebel sees to it that the prophets of YHWH will perish (בהכרית; 18:3).

exploitation was the strong suit of the Omrides—a theme developed further in the story of Naboth’s vineyard (ch. 21). As surely as YHWH heard the prayer of Elijah, “the ears of the Lord of hosts” will hear the cry of his people for justice (Jas 5:4).

In describing Elijah as “a human being like us” (ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν; 5:17), James points to the human nature of this biblical prophet. Earlier in his letter, James encouraged an audience experiencing suffering (κακοπάθεια; 5:10, 13), injustice (2:6; 5:4), and even death (5:6) by pointing them to the example of “suffering and patience” provided by “the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” (5:10). Indeed, the prophet Elijah, who had pronounced drought, healed the widow’s son, and called fire down from heaven also experienced fear and frustration in the midst of Israel’s sin and Jezebel’s persecution.<sup>19</sup> Thus Elijah provides an attainable example of righteous prayer. Contrary to Popkes and Dibelius, James shows evidence of a first-hand knowledge of the text, and he picks Elijah’s drought as an appropriate illustration of prayer in the midst of suffering.

The biblical story of Elijah ends neither with the prophet’s sojourn to Horeb (1 Kgs 19) nor his ascension (2 Kgs 2:1–12).<sup>20</sup> Rather, the prophet’s renown took on eschatological significance. God promised through Malachi:

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<sup>19</sup> Jezebel sought to kill the prophets of YHWH (18:4, 13), and after the contest between YHWH and Baal on Mt. Carmel she had issued a death sentence specifically for Elijah (19:2). Elijah’s response to Jezebel’s threat is not certain. If the vocalization of **וירא** provided by the MT (**וִירָא** from **ראה** ‘to see’) is correct, then Elijah simply “saw” Jezebel’s threat and fled. The versions (LXX: καὶ ἐφοβήθη; Peshitta: *wdhl*; Vul.: *timuit*) support a different vocalization (**וִירָא** from **ירא** ‘to be afraid’). Either way, Elijah’s later response was near suicidal (19:4), and he deemed his ministry a failure (19:10, 14).

<sup>20</sup> In 2 Chronicles, Elijah sends a letter to Jehoram, king of Judah, prophesying doom on account of his idolatry (ch. 21). *Seder ‘Olam Rab.* 17 places this account seven years after Elijah’s translation. This is understandable, given that the parallel account of Jehoram’s reign in 2 Kgs 8:16–24 is placed in the narrative *after* Elijah’s ascension. It should be noted, however, that Elijah did minister during the reign of Jehoram (2 Kgs 1:17), and that this episode could have been inserted by the Chronicler from a source other than 1 Kings (Brenda J. Shaver, “The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: The Growth of a Tradition” [PhD diss. University of Chicago, 2001], 65–70).

Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse. (Mal 4:5–6 NRSV; MT 3:23–24; LXX 3:22–23)<sup>21</sup>

This promise both echoed and clarified the LORD’s earlier promise in Malachi:

See! I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. (3:1–3 NRSV)

Elijah is sent before the day of the LORD to “turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents” lest Israel’s God “come and strike the land with a curse” (MT 3:23; ET 4:6).<sup>22</sup> Elijah’s mission answers the question, “who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?” (3:2). Only those generations that have been “reconciled through the agency of Elijah will be able to survive the terrible day of Yahweh.”<sup>23</sup>

It is no accident that the ninth-century prophet was assigned this restorative task in Malachi’s prophecy. Because Elijah was spared death, he continued to live in God’s

<sup>21</sup> The LXX places v. 22 after 24. The Masorah notes that in lectionary readings v. 23 is repeated after v. 24. In both cases, the reader avoids finishing the passage with “curse” (חָרָם) as the last word. Given this transposition of verses (among other things) many scholars assert that vv. 22–23 are an addendum to Malachi and perhaps the entire prophetic canon. See David George Clark, “Elijah as Eschatological High Priest: An Examination of the Elijah Tradition in Mal. 3.23–24” (PhD diss., Notre Dame, 1975), 41; David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 231. See also the well reasoned objections raised in Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger* (SBLDS 98; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 243–270; and Douglas Stuart, “Malachi,” in vol. 3 of *The Minor Prophets* (ed. Thomas E. McComiskey; vol. 3; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 1391–1392.

<sup>22</sup> The nature of Elijah’s mission to “turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents” reflects both intergenerational restoration as well as a return to the covenant faithfulness of Israel’s forefathers. According to the prophet, Israel should have honored God as a son honors his father (1:6). Instead she has profaned and forsaken the covenant of her fathers (2:10; 3:7). Still, God calls Israel, “Return to me, and I will return to you” (3:7). If Israel repents she will be spared by God, as a father spares his children (3:17; Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 342–343).

<sup>23</sup> Petersen, 231.

presence after his ascension and was available for the mission. In addition, the ministry of Elijah before his ascension bares a strong resemblance to the message of Malachi. Brevard Childs outlines these similarities quite convincingly:

Like Malachi, Elijah addressed ‘all Israel’ (I Kings 18.20). The people of Israel were severely fragmented by indecision of faith (18.21). A curse had fallen on the land (18.1 // Mal. 3.24, EVV 4.6). Elijah challenged all Israel to respond to God by forcing a decision between the right and the wrong (// Mal. 3.18). He did it by means of the right offering (// Mal. 3.3) and a fire which fell from heaven (// Mal. 3.3, 19).<sup>24</sup>

Childs goes on to assert that the author intentionally associates the spiritual condition of his present and future readers with the corrupt spiritual condition of Israel in the time of Elijah by means of “typological analogy.” Thus, the ministry of the historical Elijah is closely linked with the mission of the eschatological Elijah.

As shown above, James quite appropriately chooses the historical Elijah as an example of righteous prayer, but given the close association between the ministry of Elijah in 1 Kings and the mission of Elijah assigned in Malachi, it would seem logical to explore the potential importance of the “eschatological Elijah” for James as well. At first glance this may seem to be a fool’s errand. After all, James does not directly quote or even allude to Malachi’s prophecy in 5:17–18. Elijah is a figure familiar to apocalyptic and eschatological expectations, but James seems to turn away from “apocalyptic speculations to focus upon a human quality that speaks more vividly to his readers.”<sup>25</sup> It seems as if James downplays the eschatological Elijah, describing the prophet as “a human being like us” (ἄνθρωπος ἢν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν; 5:17).

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<sup>24</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 495–496.

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Hartin, “Who is Wise and Understanding Among You?” (James 3:13). An Analysis of Wisdom, Eschatology and Apocalypticism in the Epistle of James,” *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1996 (SBLSP 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 492.



There are, however a few factors that suggest benefit in examining both the historical background and the echoes of the eschatological Elijah in James. First it should be noted that while acknowledging James' harmony with wisdom literature, scholars have also acknowledged the letter's eschatological and prophetic tenor. In the study of early Jewish and Christian literature, the once sharply held distinctions between wisdom and apocalyptic literature have been challenged, as wisdom literature often appropriates apocalyptic motifs, while apocalyptic often appropriates wisdom.<sup>26</sup> Todd C. Penner applies these findings in his monograph, *The Epistle of James and Eschatology*, and demonstrates that wisdom and apocalyptic eschatology are far from mutually exclusive in James.<sup>27</sup>

Peter H. Davids is correct to note that "eschatology is not the burden of the book," but it is "the context of the book."<sup>28</sup> James is certainly not an "apocalypse," but its eschatological context is clear.<sup>29</sup> Apocalypse as a literary genre has been defined as:

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<sup>26</sup> Note especially the work accomplished by the SBL "Wisdom and Apocalypticism Group," and the collection of essays titled, *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (eds. Benjamin G. Wright III and Lawrence M. Wills; SBLSymS 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). See also John J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility," in *In Search of Wisdom* (eds. Leo G. Perdue, et al.; Lexington, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 165–185.

<sup>27</sup> *The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter* (JSNTSup 121; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). The eschatological nature of the Epistle of James has been addressed by several scholars of late. See Penner's literature review in "The Epistle of James in Current Research," *CurBS* 7 (1999): 275–280; as well as William F. Brosend, *James and Jude* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 146–147; Luke L. Cheung, *The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* (PBTM; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 240–271; Peter J. Davids, *James*, 38–39; Hubert Frankemölle, *Der Brief des Jakobus* (ÖTK 17/1-2; GTB 517-518; Gütersloher: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), 1:272–276. Patrick J. Hartin, "Who is wise?"; idem, *James*, 34–35; Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, "A Letter to the Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora: Wisdom and 'Apocalyptic' Eschatology in the Letter of James," *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1996 (SBLSP 33; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996), 504–517; idem, "The Messiah Jesus in the Mythic World of James," *JBL* 122 (2003): 701–730; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 29–30; Franz Mußner, *Der Jakobusbrief* (2nd ed. HTKNT 13/1; Fribert: Herder, 1967), 209–211; Robert W. Wall, "James as Apocalyptic Paraenesis," *ResQ* 32 (1990): 11–22.

<sup>28</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 39.

<sup>29</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 508. The exact relationship of the terms "apocalypse," "apocalypticism," and "apocalyptic eschatology" has been subject to scrutiny in regard to the Epistle of James. In this thesis "apocalypse" will refer to the genre, "apocalypticism" to a historical movement. "Eschatology" will refer to "the larger end-time scheme attested in the New Testament and early Judaism. . . ." Eschatology concerns "life as viewed under the shadow of a future, imminent divine judgment on the wicked and reward for the

revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.<sup>30</sup>

James is not set within a narrative framework, nor does it depict revelation via otherworldly beings. This should not, however, lead one to believe that apocalyptic eschatology is *absent* from James.<sup>31</sup> The genre “apocalyptic” has been further defined as literature

intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.<sup>32</sup>

Given this expanded definition, James’ apocalyptic eschatology comes into focus. The author certainly interprets “present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future,” and his chief emphasis is on influencing the behavior of his audience.

The *supernatural* orientation of James’ letter is seen in his description of wisdom as either “from above” or “earthly, unspiritual, devilish” (3:14–17; cf. 2:19). The tongue is “set on fire by hell” (3:6), and whoever is a “friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (4:4). This warning against double-minded loyalty to God and to the world is captured in the imperative, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4:7). The future orientation of his letter is also evident. Future judgment serves as

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righteous” (Penner, *James and Eschatology*, 111). See also Dale C. Allison, “Apocalyptic,” *DJG* 17–10. John J. Collins, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism (Early Jewish Apocalypticism),” *ABD* 1:282–283; Paul D. Hanson, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism (The Genre),” *ABD* 1:279–280.

<sup>30</sup> John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: A Morphology of a Genre* (*Semeia* 14; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Wesley Hiram Wachob, “The Apocalyptic Intertexture of the Epistle of James,” in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; *SBLSS* 14; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 183.

<sup>32</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins, ed., *Early Christian Apocalypticism* (*Semeia* 36; Decatur, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986), 7.

motivation for correct behavior. Potential teachers are warned of “a greater judgment” (3:1). Slander and contention are subject to the imminent scrutiny of the judge who is “standing at the doors” (4:11; 5:9). Truthfulness of speech is demanded lest one “fall under condemnation” (5:12), and the oppressive rich face “the day of slaughter” (5:1–6). Future reward also serves as motivation. Those who endure temptation will receive “a crown of life” (1:12). The “implanted word” has the power to “save souls” (1:21), and those who hear and obey the law face future blessing (1:25).<sup>33</sup> For James, “life in this world receives its significance from the eschatological future, but the eschatological future of those who hold Jesus’ faith is determined by their present behavior.”<sup>34</sup>

James is not, however simply focused on *future* weal and woe. Rather, he views his readers as living in an age of eschatological fulfillment, evidencing an “inaugurated eschatology.” James writes to the reconstituted “twelve tribes” (1:1)—the “firstfruits of his creation,” born of the “word of truth” (1:18).<sup>35</sup> Both the poor and rich are admonished to “boast” in eschatological reversal (1:9–11). The poor are declared “heirs of the kingdom” (κληρονόμοι τῆς βασιλείας; 2:5), and the community is subject to the “royal law” (νόμος βασιλικός; 2:8). Yet, while James’ community is the locus of “eschatological fulfillment,” it still faces a world hostile to God’s kingdom.<sup>36</sup> The twelve tribes are still “dispersed” (1:1) and the plight of the widows and orphans is described as “tribulation” (θλίψις; 1:27).<sup>37</sup> His

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<sup>33</sup> Mußner (209) cites the future verb ἔσται as evidence of future orientation in 1:25. He summarizes James’ eschatologically oriented ethic as an *Interimsethik*. “He tells them what they have to do ‘meanwhile,’ in these last days in order to be able to stand before God in judgment and to participate in his promise” (210). [Er sagt ihnen, was sie ‘einstweilen,’ in diesen letzten Tagen, noch zu tun haben, um vor Gottes nahem Gericht bestehen zu können und seiner Verheißungen teilhaft zu werden.]

<sup>34</sup> Wachob, “Apocalyptic Intertexture,” 185.

<sup>35</sup> The significance of the letter being written ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ will be explored below.

<sup>36</sup> Moo (30) refers to James’ eschatology as reflecting eschatological “fulfillment without consummation.”

<sup>37</sup> θλίψις can be viewed as a technical term for the trials and tribulations of the eschaton (Dan 12:1; Matt 24:9, 21, 24; Mark 13:19, 24; 2 Thess 1:4; Rev 1:9; 2:9, 10, 22; 7:14; cf. Herm. Vis. 2.2.7). Hartin applies this

community is dragged into courts (2:6) and exploited by the rich – even to the point of murder (5:1–6). Still, James points his readers to eschatological hope, encouraging the community to remain patient and to “strengthen their hearts,” for “the coming of the Lord is near” (παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν; 5:7–8). While James is no apocalypse, it is correct to say that the letter is “governed from one end to the other by vivid expectation of the imminent return of Christ.”<sup>38</sup> Given this broad eschatological setting, James’ use of Elijah as a paradigm for his community’s behavior could very well evoke the eschatological function of the prophet.

In addition to the overall tenor of the letter, the immediate context of Elijah’s drought in chapter 5 sounds an eschatological note as well. “The prayer of faith will save (σώσει) the sick, and the Lord will raise (ἐγερῇ) them up” (v. 15). Robert W. Wall has suggested that James’ use of these “resurrection verbs,” σώζω and ἐγείρω, “underscores healing as an experience of God’s resurrection power, given now to the community in anticipation of the restoration of the entire created order at the Lord’s parousia.”<sup>39</sup> The elders’ use of oil to anoint the sick provides another eschatological image. In the *Apocalypse of Moses*, the healing “oil of mercy” is to be reserved only for the “end of times” (ἔσχατος τῶν καιρῶν), when “all flesh from Adam up to that day shall be raised (ἀναστήσεται). . .” (13:2–3).<sup>40</sup> James also explains, immediately following his mention of Elijah’s drought, that

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eschatological connotation to 1:27, stating that “James reinterprets the everyday sufferings of those most abandoned in society as the signs that the end is rapidly approaching” (“Who is Wise?” 494). See also Edwards, 68, n. 70; Laws, *James*, 89–90; and Heinrich Schlier, “Θλίβω, θλίψις,” *TDNT* 3:139–148.

<sup>38</sup> Savvas Agouridēs, “Origin of the Epistle of St. James: Suggestions for a Fresh Approach,” *GOTR* 9.1 (1963): 69.

<sup>39</sup> *Community of the Wise: The Letter of James* (The New Testament in Context; Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 266. See also Timothy B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James* (SBLDS 144. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 192–193; and N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection and the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 461.

<sup>40</sup> M. D. Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” *OTP* 2:275, cited in Hartin, *James*, 278. See also Martin C. Albl, “Are Any among You Sick? The Health Care System in the Letter of James,” *JBL* 12 (2002): 138. One of future tasks

anyone who “brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death” (σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου; 5:19–20), thus avoiding final judgment. Thus the immediate context of Elijah’s drought in James is one of eschatological healing and restoration.

That James chose Elijah’s prayer for drought and rain, and that the drought lasted “three years and six months” (ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἑξ) is certainly similar to the context of judgment implied in Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:25–27) and the drought produced by the two witnesses in Revelation (11:3–13)—both of which last for three years and six months. While scholars are divided regarding the symbolic value of this time period in James, it is possible that it references the apocalyptic imagery of Daniel and Revelation.<sup>41</sup>

The greater context of James 5 amplifies the eschatological echoes heard in vv. 17–18. In a manner similar to the prophets, James calls the rich to sorrow over their ill-gotten gain (vv. 1–6).<sup>42</sup> Though the rich had “laid up treasures for the last days” (v. 3), their treasures would only serve as evidence against them. The complaint of the exploited have “reached the ears of the Lord of hosts” (v. 4; cf. Isa 5:7). Ultimately the luxuries and pleasures of the rich only served to “fatten [their] hearts in a day of slaughter” (cf. Jer 12:3;

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of Elijah is to restore the anointing oil lost during the exile (*Mek.* on Exod 16:33–34). On the hidden vessels of the temple, including the anointing oil, and their future restoration see: *y. Šeq.* 6:1; 2 *Bar.* 6; 2 *Macc* 1:19; 2:4–8; *Jos. Ant.* 18.85–87 (Marilyn F. Collins, “The Hidden Vessels in Samaritan Traditions,” *JSJ* 3 [1972]: 97–116).

<sup>41</sup> Besides the Lukan parallel, “three years and six months” (Luke 4:25), note the overtly apocalyptic half week (Dan 9:27); time, times, and half a time (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14); 1,290 days (Rev 11:3), 1,290 days (Dan 12:11), 1,335 days (Dan 12:12), and 42 months (Rev 11:2; 13:5)—all of which are either equivalent or near equivalent durations of time. See also the “three and a half days” of Rev 11:9, 11. The symbolic value of this time period will be discussed below.

<sup>42</sup> Hartin notes that Ἄγε νῦν in 4:13 and 5:1 introduces a prophetic woe oracles in the same way as οὐαί (“Who is wise?” 486).

7:32; 19:6).<sup>43</sup> Mark A. Seifrid observes that by citing Elijah as an example of prayer, “James may be quietly reminding his readers of the efficacy of their cries to ‘the Lord of hosts,’ who shall finally bring judgment upon those who oppress the poor (James 5:4–6)”<sup>44</sup> Seifrid’s claim is further supported by the image of patient endurance in the midst of oppression that follows James’ woe to the rich:

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord (παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου). The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains (πρόϊμον καὶ ὄψιμον). You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near (ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν). (5:7–8 NRSV)

As the farmer is to wait patiently for the sure coming of the rain, James’ audience is admonished to wait patiently for the sure coming of the Lord. This encouragement is followed immediately with the admonition:

Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See the judge is standing at the doors (ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἔστηκεν). (5:9)

James calls the community to solidarity in light of the imminent coming of God as judge. James begins this eschatologically charged section likening the coming of the Lord to arrival of the early and late rains, and then cites Elijah’s prayer for drought *and* rain in the context of healing and restoration at the end of the chapter. This creates at the very least a thematic *inclusio* based on “rain” imagery. At the most it could point to an eschatological aspect of Elijah’s prayer.

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Bauckham provides a helpful discussion of the Old Testament background of vv. 1–6. Regarding the Old Testament background of v. 5 in particular Bauckham suggests that the “day of slaughter” in Jer 12:3 is associated with judgment of the wicked in the Hinnom valley (*Gehenna*) via *gēzērâ šāwâ* (Jer 17:3; 19:6; “The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study,” in *Hearing the New Testament* [ed. Joel B. Green; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 101–103).

<sup>44</sup> “The Waiting Church and Its Duty: James 5:13–18,” *SBJT* 4.3 (Fall 2000): 37.

James uses the example Elijah in a letter saturated with eschatological expectation. It would behoove the interpreter to closely examine how the *eschatological* Elijah may fit into James. The epistle's description of Elijah as "a human like us" (ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν) does not negate the rich eschatological imagery that evolved around the prophet. It will be contended in this thesis that James is fully aware of the eschatological implications of using Elijah as an example of faithful, righteous prayer. In so doing we will show that Elijah's prayer for drought and rain functions to give the community of faith a prophetic role similar to that of the eschatological Elijah. James' community, as the restored twelve tribes of Israel, is called to endure in the midst of eschatological trials and to effect repentance before the arrival of the soon-coming King.

This thesis will begin with a review of modern explanations of the function of Elijah's drought in James, showing that little attention has been paid to the eschatological Elijah as he relates to this passage. Next a review of Elijah's drought in early Jewish literature will be conducted. Many of these texts blend both the eschatological and historical imagery associated with the paradigmatic prophet, and closely associate Elijah with Israel's exile and restoration. After this survey, Elijah's association with Israel's exile and restoration will be explored as it applies to James. Next, Elijah's drought, as mentioned in two New Testament contexts outside of James (Luke 4:14–30 and Rev 11:3–13) will be examined, showing that Elijah's drought was closely associated with eschatological judgment for the sake of repentance and restoration. Finally, the images of drought and rain will be examined showing that their function as covenant curse and blessing developed into images of eschatological judgment and restoration consistent with James' use of rain imagery. In light of these findings, it will be seen that James uses Elijah's prayer

for drought and rain to illustrate the function of a prophetic community living in between the drought of this world and the imminent reign of God.



## Literature Review

Elijah as an exemplar in James 5:17–18 has received relatively little attention, especially in comparison to the attention paid to James' *apparent* soterological contradictions with Paul (2:14–26). Nevertheless, there have been a few important contributions to this text. This survey will concentrate on the handful of scholars who have focused on James' use of Elijah's prayer.

### *Giovanni Claudio Bottini*

Primacy of place must be given to the Italian scholar, Giovanni Claudio Bottini. Bottini has published several articles and studies pertinent to both the biblical and extrabiblical accounts of Elijah's drought.<sup>1</sup> Most important to this paper is his thorough analysis of the early Jewish and Christian backgrounds of James 5:17–18.<sup>2</sup> Bottini thoroughly reviews parallel accounts of Elijah's drought both in biblical (1 Kgs 17–18; Luke 4:25–26; Rev. 11:6) and extrabiblical contexts looking for insight into the function of the drought episode in James.<sup>3</sup> After his analysis of these other texts, he closely exegetes the context of Elijah's drought in James, including both James' teaching on prayer (vv. 13–16) and his teaching on the restoration of the wandering brother (vv. 19–20). Given this

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<sup>1</sup> "Il racconto della siccità e della pioggia (1 Re 17–18). Studi recenti—Arte narrativa" *SBFLA* 29 (1979): 327–349; "Una aggadah giudaica su Elia ripresa dai Padri" *SBFLA* 30 (1980): 167–76; "Pose la sua faccia tra le ginocchia" 1 Re 18,42 e paralleli estrabiblici" *SBFLA* 32 (1982): 73–84; "Confessione e intercessione in Giacomo 5,16," *SBFLA* 33 (1983): 193–226; *Giacomo e la sua Lettera: Una Introduzione* (SBFA 50; Jerusalem, Franciscan, 2000), 132–133.

<sup>2</sup> *La Preghiera di Elia in Giacomo 5,17–18* (SBFA 19; Jerusalem: Franciscan, 1981). This monograph has gone virtually unnoticed in English commentaries. Robert J. Harris does interact with Bottini briefly in "Some New Angles on James 5:13–20," *RevExp* 97 (2000): 216, as does Anthony Tyrrell Hanson (*The Living Utterances of God: The New Testament Exegesis of the Old* [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983], 154–155). For reviews, see A. Hilhorst, *JSJ* 15 (1985): 165–166 and J. Edgar Bruns, *CBQ* 45 (1983): 306–307.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kgs 17–18; Sir 48:2–3; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.319, 324; *L.A.B.* 48:1; 4 Ezra 7:106–111; *Tg. 1 Kgs 17–18*; *Tg. Ruth* 1:1; *Sifra* Lev. 26:4; *Gen. Rab.* 33.5; 77.1; *Deut. Rab.* 10.2–3.

delimitation, Bottini asserts that Elijah's drought illustrates not only righteous prayer (v. 16), but righteous prayer in the context of sin, confession, repentance, and restoration.

Bottini demonstrates the significance of these themes for a biblical theology of intercession by comparing James with three Old Testament passages (1 Kgs 8:22–53; Jer 14:1–15:4; Dan 9:3–20). The first passage studied is Solomon's temple dedication prayer. Here the king models repentance and prayer in the midst of national calamity. Bottini notes that James similarly provides a model of corporate prayer, and confession in the midst of suffering, sickness and sin. A striking parallel to the Elijah narrative is seen in Solomon's request for God to hear Israel and forgive their sins when faced with drought (1 Kgs 8:35–36). The table below illustrates verbal parallels between Solomon's prayer as translated in the LXX and James 5:13–20.<sup>4</sup>

1 Kings 8:35–36	James 5:13–20
a. ἐν τῷ συσχεθῆναι τὸν <u>οὐρανὸν</u> καὶ μὴ γενέσθαι <u>ὑετόν</u> ὅτι ἀμαρτήσονται σοι	... τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι, καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ... καὶ ὁ <u>οὐρανὸς</u> <u>ὑετόν</u> ἔδωκεν (v. 17–18)
b. καὶ <u>προσεύχονται</u> εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον	Ἡλίας ... <u>προσευχῇ</u> <u>προσηύξατο</u> ... καὶ πάλιν <u>προσηύξατο</u> (vv. 17–18)
c. καὶ <u>ἐξομολογήσονται</u> τῷ <u>ὀνόματί σου</u>	ἐν τῷ <u>ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου</u> ... <u>ἐξομολογεῖσθε</u> οὓν ἀλλήλοις (v. 14, 15)
d. καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν <u>ἀμαρτιῶν</u> αὐτῶν <u>ἀποστρέψουσιν</u> ὅταν ταπεινώσης αὐτούς καὶ εἰσακούσῃ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἴλεως ᾖ τῇ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις τοῦ δούλου σου καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ σου Ἰσραὴλ	... κὰν ἀμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ. ἐξομολογεῖσθε οὓν ἀλλήλοις τὰς ἀμαρτίας καὶ εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων ὅπως ἰαθῇτε. ... <u>ἐπιστρέψῃ</u> τις αὐτόν, γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ <u>ἐπιστρέψας</u> ἀμαρτωλὸν ... (vv. 15–16; 19–20)
e. ὅτι δηλώσεις αὐτοῖς <u>τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν ἀγαθὴν</u> πορεύεσθαι ἐν αὐτῇ	ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἀμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης <u>ὁδοῦ</u> αὐτοῦ (v. 20)

<sup>4</sup> Bottini notes the several verbal and thematic affinities between the larger contexts of 1 Kings 8:22–53 and James 5:13–20, but he rightly concentrates his study on vv. 35–36 (*Pregghiera*, 168–171).

- f. καὶ δώσεις ὑετὸν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἣν  
 ἔδωκας τῷ λαῷ σου ἐν κληρονομίᾳ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . . καὶ πάλιν  
 προσηύξατο, καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν  
 ἔδωκεν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν  
 αὐτῆς. (vv. 17–18)

Besides sharing the imagery of drought and rain (a/f), both passages associate prayer with repentance, confession of sins and the invocation of the divine name (b, c, d). Both use “the way” as a metaphor for human conduct (e), and both view rain as God’s “gift” (f). In spite of these verbal and conceptual parallels, Bottini notes that the exact relationship between the two texts is difficult to determine and would require a full length study of its own. Even so, he asserts that both texts come from “the same religious soil.”<sup>5</sup> These parallels draw attention to the deuteronomic teaching that drought is the result of sin, while rain is bestowed for obedience (cf. Deut 11:14–17; Lev 26:3–4; 14–15; 19–20).

Next, Bottini explores the similarities between James and Jeremiah 14:1–15:4.<sup>6</sup> Here the prophet intercedes on behalf of a drought-stricken Judah (14:7–9). His prayer includes the confession of sins (vv. 7, 20), the mention of the name of Lord (vv. 7, 21), and the acknowledgment that God is “Israel’s savior in a time of trouble (σῶζεις ἐν καιρῷ κακῶν; v. 8). Still, Israel is said to “love to wander” (ἠγάπησαν κινεῖν πόδας αὐτῶν; v. 10), while they waste their prayers on idols that can do nothing to make the heavens give (ὁ οὐρανὸς δώσει) rain (v. 22).<sup>7</sup> God responds negatively to Jeremiah’s prayer: “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people” (15:1 NRSV). Here God evokes the image of two Old Testament intercessors who “stood before” the LORD. Thus

<sup>5</sup> “L’humus religioso identico. . .” It should also be noted that both Solomon and Elijah are included in the list of those known for their prayers of intercession in 4 Ezra 7:108–109 (*Pregghiera*, 171).

<sup>6</sup> *Pregghiera*, 171–172.

<sup>7</sup> Here, the LXX asks if the heavens can give “abundance” (πλησμονήν)—pointing to the agricultural results of rain (cf. LXX Isa 30:23). The MT however explicitly asks if “the heavens give showers” (הַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּנוּ רִבְבִּים).

Elijah's declaration "As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand" (1 Kgs 17:1) could easily be seen as an idiom for prayer.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Bottini examines the similarities between James' teaching on prayer and Daniel's prayer of intercession (Dan 9:3–20).<sup>9</sup> While the theme of drought is missing from Daniel's prayer, the prayer shares a common vocabulary of intercession (vv. 3, 4, 17, 18, 20) and confession (vv. 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20), and it invokes the name of the LORD (vv. 6, 15, 19).

Given the above similarities between James 5:13–20 and the prayers of Solomon, Jeremiah, and Daniel, Bottini states that:

... the evocation of the shutting of the heavens or the theme of drought and rain brings with them an entire series of other themes, such as: sin, prayer, the invocation of the name of God, conversion, forgiveness of sins, the straight way, etc.<sup>10</sup>

The themes of drought and rain, intercession and prayer, conversion and confession are all present in James 5:13–20, and they are closely associated with the prophet of 1 Kings 17–18.

Bottini acknowledges Elijah's role as a long-awaited eschatological figure, destined "to convert (ἐπιστρέψαι) the heart of the fathers towards the sons" (Sir 48:10; Mal 3:24).<sup>11</sup> He also notes some of the eschatological nuances found in early Jewish and Christian literature regarding Elijah's drought. For instance, he characterizes Elijah's drought in

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<sup>8</sup> See *b. Ber.* 6b, where it is claimed that "standing" means nothing else but prayer," because [Abraham] returned to the place where "he had stood before the Lord" (עמד שם את־פני יהוה). In this midrash on Gen 29:27, the identification of prayer with the posture of standing is reinforced by Phinehas' intervention on behalf of Israel, where he "stood and intervened/interceded" (ויעמד פינחס ויפלל; Ps 106:3). That the *darshan* associated Phinehas with this posture of prayer is significant given that Phinehas is identified as Elijah (see the treatment of *L.A.B.* 48:1 below). On standing as a posture of prayer, see also *Tg. Onq. Gen.* 18:22; 19:27; *b. Ber.* 26b; *Gen. Rab.* 68.9 on Gen 28:11; *Num. Rab.* 2.1 on Num 2:1.

<sup>9</sup> *Preghiera*, 172–174.

<sup>10</sup> "L'evocazione del cielo chiuso o del tema della siccità-pioggia portava con sé tutta una serie di altri temi come il peccato, la preghiera, l'invocazione del nome di Dio, la conversione, il perdono dei peccati, la retta via ecc" (*Preghiera*, 172).

<sup>11</sup> "È designato... per convertire (ἐπιστρέψαι) il cuore dei padri verso i figli . . ." (*Preghiera*, 173).

*Targum Ruth* 1:1 as a type of or prelude to a “messianic eschatological famine.”<sup>12</sup> In his treatment of Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth, Bottini sees a christological meaning in Luke’s account of the drought, noting that the geographical and chronological details reinforce the typological aspects of the account.<sup>13</sup> Overall, however, Bottini pays little attention to any eschatological nuance in James’ use of Elijah. He downplays any eschatological significance to the three and a half year duration in James 5:17 and Luke 4:25, asserting that “the threat of judgment is not explicitly found in either . . . in spite of the dramatic nature of the event.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Keith Warrington**

Keith Warrington explores the significance of Elijah in James 5:13–18 in a series of articles published over fifteen years.<sup>15</sup> Paying close attention to the original Old Testament context as well as the context of extrabiblical Jewish literature, Warrington addresses the peculiarities of Elijah’s drought in James. He asserts that James uses the example of Elijah to illustrate the power and potential of prayer, the value of the fervent prayer of the righteous, and the significance of the will of God in prayer.<sup>16</sup> This last point provides the most intriguing aspect of this study of Elijah in James.<sup>17</sup> He goes as far as to say that the importance of the will of God for prayer “provides the most likely reason for [James’]

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<sup>12</sup> “Essa infatti, insieme alle altre nove, è preludio (tipo?) della carestia messianica escatologica” (*Preghiera*, 166). See also *Gen Rab.* 25.3; 40.3; 64.2 and *Ruth Rab.* 1.4.

<sup>13</sup> *Preghiera*, 166.

<sup>14</sup> “La minaccia del giudizio non è esplicitamente rilevata né in Gc 5,17-18 né in Lc 4,25-26 nonostante la drammaticità dell’evento” (Bottini, *Introduzione*, 133). Cf. Dibelius, 256–257; Mußner, 226. He sides with Frankemölle (*Der Brief des Jakobus*, 734), stating that ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἕξ simply stands for “three good years.”

<sup>15</sup> Keith Warrington, “Some Observations on James 5:13–18,” *EPTA Bulletin* 8.4 (1989): 160–177; “The Significance of Elijah in James 5:13–18,” *EQ* 66.3 (1994): 217–227; “James 5:14–18: Healing Then and Now,” *International Review of Missions* 93 (2004): 346–367.

<sup>16</sup> Warrington, “Significance,” 219–227.

<sup>17</sup> Warrington, “Significance,” 224.

adaptation of the Old Testament account of Elijah.”<sup>18</sup> To support this claim, Warrington points to James’ assertion that the drought was the result of Elijah’s prayer, while the Old Testament account states that it was the result of Elijah’s declaration in 1 Kgs 17:1. He also notes that drought as a punishment for Israel’s sin was dependent upon the will of God revealed in the Pentateuch (Deut 11:14–17; Lev 26:3–4; 14–15; 19–20), and Sirach emphasizes that it was by the word of God that the drought ensued (Sir 48:3). Warrington argues against those who would assert that James’ emphasis on prayer rather than the word of the Lord changes the story line of 1 Kings 17–18. Sophie Laws, for instance, notes that “as a prophet, Elijah declared the prior decision of God communicated to him; when his activity is seen as prayer, it is rather God who responds to his intercession.”<sup>19</sup> Instead, Warrington asserts that Elijah’s prayer was prompted by the prior word of God in a manner similar to prophecy. “Both prayer and prophecy are secondary and, in this context, equivalent in value: the will of God is primary. . . . The prayer/prophecy activated the response from God, but it was God who initiated them.”<sup>20</sup> For Warrington, here lies the importance of righteousness for effective prayer. The one who is righteous is likely to be praying in accord with the will of God, thus making the prayer effective.

Warrington takes little notice of the eschatological Elijah. He does mention the important role the prophet played in early Jewish and Christian literature. He also notes that in rabbinic literature Elijah was said to continue his prophetic ministry even after his ascension, and that he would be involved in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>21</sup> In addition,

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<sup>18</sup> Warrington, “Significance,” 224.

<sup>19</sup> Sophie Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, 237.

<sup>20</sup> Warrington, “Significance,” 225.

<sup>21</sup> On Elijah’s association with resurrection Warrington cites *m. Soṭah* 9:15 (“Significance,” 221).

Warrington suggests that by comparing Elijah to his readers, James may be alluding to their shared sufferings with both the historical (1 Kgs 18:17; 19:2, 3, 14) and the eschatological Elijah (Mark 9:12–13; Rev 11:3–13).<sup>22</sup> This identification with Elijah’s sufferings produces hope in the potential of prayer. “As Elijah saw God respond dynamically to his prayer, so the readers are also encouraged to expect the inbreaking hand of God into their suffering.”<sup>23</sup>

### **Robert Eisenman**

Robert Eisenman has recognized eschatological imagery associated with Elijah’s drought in James. In his latest work, he states that “‘rain-making’ and the theme of ‘coming eschatological judgment’ are . . . intrinsic to James’ Letter.”<sup>24</sup> In an earlier article on “Eschatological Rain Imagery,” Eisenman associates Elijah’s control of the rain with the early and later rains of 5:7–8.<sup>25</sup> He connects these rains with the descent of the Son of the Man “coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13) via *1QWar Scroll* (1QM), which contains similar eschatological rain imagery describing the arrival of an army of angels in a great eschatological battle. For Eisenman, this eschatological rain imagery in James and the War Scroll is actually a coded depiction of James the Just as a righteous rainmaker.<sup>26</sup> Using a

<sup>22</sup> Warrington cites J. Jeremias, “Ἡλ(ε)ίας,” *TDNT* 2:939–940 (“Significance,” 224).

<sup>23</sup> “Significance,” 220.

<sup>24</sup> *The New Testament Code: The Cup of the Lord, the Damascus Covenant, and the Blood of Christ* (London: Watkins, 2006), 132; author’s emphasis.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Eisenman, “Eschatological ‘Rain’ Imagery in the War Scroll from Qumran and in the Letter of James,” *JNES* 49.2 (April 1990): 173–184; repr. in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians: Essays and Translations* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1996). See also his subsequent tome: *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> *New Testament Code*, 128, 133. Eisenman makes reference to James the Just’s prayer for rain as described by Epiphanius, ποτὲ ἀβροχίας γενομένης ἐπῆρε τὰς χεῖρας εἰς οὐρανὸν καὶ προσηύξατο, καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ οὐρανὸς ἔδωκεν ὑετόν (*Pan.* 78.14). While this later tradition is certainly interesting to this thesis, Epiphanius’ account is surely based on legend that developed from Jas 5:17–18. See Theodor Zahn, “Brüder und Vetter Jesu,” *FGNK* 6.2 (1990): 265; Richard Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (eds. D. A. Carson & H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 308.

complex web of associations based on Hebrew terms such as צדק (righteousness) and קנה (zeal), he places James in the ideological tradition of Noah, Phinehas, Elijah, Honi the Circle-drawer, and Hanina ben Dosa. He then identifies James with the Teacher of Righteousness and with the factions that Josephus labeled as “deceivers” (πλάνοι), “imposters” (ἄπατεῶνες), “robbers” (λησταί) and “magicians” (γόητες).<sup>27</sup> James is described further as a zealous nationalistic “‘opposition’ High Priest” that presided over the Jerusalem community.<sup>28</sup> Eisenman connects the three and a half year duration of Elijah’s drought (Jas 5:17; Luke 4:25) with these zealots, stating that the time period corresponds to the span between James’ martyrdom (AD 62) and the cessation of the temple sacrifices (Josephus *War* 2.407-20; 6.300-9).<sup>29</sup> By applying Daniel’s three and a half year symbol of judgment to Elijah’s drought, Eisenman claims that James’ death precipitated a “final apocalyptic Holy War, represented by the Uprising against Rome.”<sup>30</sup>

Such an interpretation of “eschatological rain imagery” in James is strained. First, Eisenman’s association of the rain only with eschatological judgment neglects the strong association of rain with blessing (Deut 11:13–15; 28:12; Pss 68:9; 72:6; Isa 30:23).<sup>31</sup> Second, and most importantly, Eisenman’s recognition of “eschatological rain imagery” in James is hampered by his infamous rejection of scholarly consensus on the relationship between Qumran and early Christianity.<sup>32</sup> He dates the original authorship of the Qumran library to

<sup>27</sup> E.g., the zealots. On the identification of James with the Teacher of Righteousness, see *James the Just in the Habakkuk Peshier* (StPB 35; Leiden: Brill, 1986); repr. in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1996), 112. On the identification of James with the zealots, see “Eschatological Rain,” 184, where Eisenman cites Josephus, *J.W.* 2.258–264; 6.288; *Ant.* 20.167.

<sup>28</sup> *James the Just in the Habakkuk Peshier*, 118.

<sup>29</sup> “Eschatological Rain,” 180 n. 33.

<sup>30</sup> *New Testament Code*, 134; see also “Eschatological Rain,” 179.

<sup>31</sup> Rain and drought imagery in light of OT and early Jewish literature will be discussed below.

<sup>32</sup> The general consensus is: “The Qumranites . . . existed during the time of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth (26–30 C.E.). But none of the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to him, and they do not mention any follower of Jesus



the first century AD in order to equate James with the Teacher of Righteousness, Paul with the “spouter of lies” and the High Priest Ananus with the “Wicked Priest.”<sup>33</sup> As mentioned above, these relationships are found by comparing similar vocabulary in multiple Jewish and Christian documents. Philip R. Davies rightly critiques this method: “The use of a common term in Jewish and Christian texts that are historically or ideologically connected (or even those that are not) does not automatically count as proof that the texts participate in the same esoteric or technical discourse.”<sup>34</sup> Eisenman’s indicts his own theory in his description of his “method”:

There is no guidebook to these ideologies, or for that matter, to the terminologies related to them. In fact, *the tradition may be a figment of the modern critic’s imagination*; however, the interlocking themes and notations are there, and through an analysis of their parallels and connections, a reconstruction may be achieved which comes to look like an ideology.<sup>35</sup>

Eisenman makes extraordinary claims regarding James’ “eschatological rain imagery.” His proposed ideology is most certainly a figment of his imagination. Still, the connection between James’ rain imagery and eschatology is worth investigating, taking caution not to “over-interpret.”

### ***Dennis R. Edwards***

In his dissertation, “Reviving the Faith: An Eschatological Understanding of James 5:13–20,” Dennis R. Edwards argues that the final section of the epistle (5:13–20) encourages faithfulness in the midst of eschatological trials. Regarding Elijah in James,

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described in the New Testament” (James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* [ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992], xxxi–xxxvii; 4).

<sup>33</sup> See his *Maccabees, Zadokites, Christians and Qumran: A New Hypothesis of Qumran Origins* (StPB 34; Leiden: Brill, 1983); repr. in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1996), 3–110.

<sup>34</sup> Philip R. Davies, “James in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *James the Just & Christian Origins* (ed. Bruce Chilton & Craig A. Evans; NovTSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 23.

<sup>35</sup> Eisenman, “Eschatological Rain,” 173 (emphasis added).

Edwards makes a few interesting observations. First, he notices a similarity between the sun/scorching heat as judgment against the rich (1:9–11) and drought as judgment against the idolatrous (5:17–18). Both passages use weather imagery in their description of judgment from God. Though he acknowledges the eschatological imagery of the early and later rains in 5:7 and observes that the judgment of the wicked is an eschatological theme in James (4:12; 5:9), he states that the rain/sun imagery “does not necessarily call to mind an eschatological context.”<sup>36</sup>

In his exegesis of 5:17–18, Edwards does not lay much emphasis on Elijah as an eschatological figure.<sup>37</sup> While he acknowledges that “Elijah figures prominently in Old Testament and New Testament eschatology,” he states that James places emphasis on Elijah’s human characteristics (ὁμοιοπαθής) over against “supernatural” characteristics.<sup>38</sup> He asserts that Elijah’s prayer for rain does not illustrate the powerful prayer of the righteous for healing, nor does the drought represent sickness or the rain healing. For Edwards, James does not teach on physical healing but rather on the restoration for the spiritually weak. Elijah’s drought illustrates “spiritual distance” (vv. 14–16), and the “fruitful land depicts spiritual restoration.”<sup>39</sup> Hence, he states that the drought narrative is more appropriate than the account of Elijah raising the widow’s son from the dead (1 Kgs

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<sup>36</sup> Edwards cites Eisenman’s article on “Eschatological ‘Rain’ Imagery,” but he only states that “The rain imagery of Jas 4:7 [*sic*] may have eschatological context” (84, n. 128; emphasis added).

<sup>37</sup> Edwards refers to several biblical passages regarding Elijah’s eschatological role (Mal 4:5–6; Sir 48:1–12; 4 Ezra 7:109; Mark 9:11–12; Luke 1:17, 4:25–26; Rom 11:2), and then notes that “several of these examples focus upon Elijah’s prayer regarding rain.” Actually, only 4 Ezra 7 specifically makes mention of Elijah’s prayer for rain, while Sirach 48 and Luke 4 only speak of the drought (142, n. 162).

<sup>38</sup> Ὅμοιοπαθής is used in 4 Macc 12:13; Wis 7:3 and Acts 14:15 to describe shared humanity between individuals (Edwards, 142).

<sup>39</sup> Edwards, 143.

17:17–24), while James’ emphasis on Elijah’s humanity intentionally evokes Elijah’s fearful flight from Jezebel (1 Kgs 19).<sup>40</sup>

Two aspects of this dissertation are particularly relevant to studying the eschatological Elijah in James. First, Edwards builds a case that the opening (1:2–12) and the close (5:13–20) of the Epistle contain parallel eschatological themes that frame the content of the letter.<sup>41</sup> Second, Edwards examines the prescript of James in detail, and applies early Jewish exile theology to the letter. Edwards’ application of N. T. Wright’s view of exile/restoration theology to the book of James is helpful in its explanation of the letter’s recipients as the “twelve tribes.” However, his spiritualization of the “Dispersion” (1:1) and healing/sickness (5:13–18) is less convincing, given his failure to explore Wright’s interpretation of Jesus’ miracles.

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<sup>40</sup> Citing Daniel R. Hayden, “Calling the Elders to Pray,” *BibSac* 138 (1981): 265.

<sup>41</sup> Edwards, 66–85.

## Elijah and Restoration in Early Jewish Literature

Elijah the prophet is a regular part of early Jewish eschatology. His ascension (2 Kgs 2) and Malachi's prophecy of his return guaranteed him a place in the eschatological expectations of Israel. Given the volume of references to both the eschatological and the historical Elijah, a complete survey is not possible. Below, we will look at several texts which explicitly mention elements of the drought narrative (1 Kgs 17–18). It will be shown that often elements from the drought narrative are used to enhance a text's description of the eschatological Elijah. The converse will be shown true as well. Often themes associated with the prophet's return are used to enhance re-tellings of the Elijah narratives.

### *Elijah in Sirach's "Praise of the Fathers"*

Sirach includes Elijah among the heroes of Israel's past in his "Praise of the Fathers" (chs. 44–50).<sup>1</sup> A study of the "Praise of Elijah" (48:1–11) is important, as Sirach juxtaposes Elijah's preexilic ministry with the eschatological expectation of his return.<sup>2</sup> The sage does

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<sup>1</sup> On the "Praise of the Fathers" see John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 97–111; Siebeneck, Robert T. "May Their Bones Return to Life!—Sirach's Praise of the Fathers." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 (1959): 411–428; James. D. Martin, "Ben Sira's Hymn to the Fathers A Messianic Perspective," *Crises and Perspectives* (OTS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 107–123; Dom Thierry Maertens, *L'Éloge des Pères* (LumVie 5; Bruges: L'Abbaye de Saint-Andre, 1956); Burton L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Pancratius C. Beentjes, "The 'Praise of the Famous' and its Prologue," *Bijdr* 45 (1984): 374–383; Greek text according to Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (Verkleinerte Ausgabe in einem Band; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979); Hebrew text of MS B according to Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (VTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> On Sirach's "Praise of Elijah" see Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 528–535; Jean Lévêque, "Le Portrait d'Élie dans l'Éloge des Pères," in *Ce Dieu qui Vient* (159; Paris: du Cerf, 1995), 216–229; Pancratius C. Beentjes, "De Stammen van Israël Herstellen: Het portret van Elia bij Jesus Sirach," *ACEBT* 5 (1984): 145–155; *idem.*, "In Search of Parallels: Ben Sira and the Book of Kings," in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira And Tobit* (eds. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Kemp; CBQMS 38; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 118–131; Émile Puech, "Ben Sira 48:11 et la Résurrection," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990), 81–90; Georg Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sirach* (ATDA 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 325–328; Ralph Hildesheim, *Bis dass ein Prophet aufstand wie Feurer: Untersuchungen zum Prophetenverständnis des Ben Sira in Sir 48,1–49,16* (TThSt 58; Trier: Paulinus, 1996), 119–124; Wido van Peursen, "Que vive celui qī fait vivre: le texte syriaque du

not simply repeat biblical tradition. Rather he blends elements of Malachi's prophecy of the day of the LORD with his account of Elijah's fight against Israel's apostasy. Elijah is introduced as an anonymous "prophet like fire" (נביא כאש) whose "word burned like a furnace" (כתנור בוער; v. 1). The burning word of the "prophet like fire" immediately associates Elijah's ministry with the day of the LORD—described as "like a refiner's fire" (כאש מצרף; Mal 3:2) and "burning like an oven" (בער כתנור; 4:1; LXX 3:19).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Elijah's ministry is characterized by judgment and fire, and ends only after he is caught up in "a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire" (v. 9).<sup>4</sup> Thus, Elijah's first mission to Israel is set within a fiery *inclusio*.

The mission of the prophet extends into the future, as Sirach "quotes" the prophet Malachi:

הכתוב נכון לעת	ὁ καταγραφείς ἐν ἐλεγμοῖς εἰς καιροῦς
להשבית אף לפני.]	κοπάσαι ὀργὴν πρὸ θυμοῦ
להשיב לב אבות על בנים	ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίαν πατρός πρὸς υἱὸν
ולהכין ש[.....]ל	καὶ καταστήσαι φυλὰς Ἰακωβ

The content of v. 11 is introduced with the formula "it is written" (ὁ καταγραφείς), but the quotation is less than exact.<sup>5</sup> Sirach repeats the timing of Elijah's eschatological mission as

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Siracide 48,10-12," in *L'enfance de la Bible hébraïque: L'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament à la lumière des recherches récentes* (eds. Adrian Schenker & Philippe Hugo; MdB 52; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2005), 286–301.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek, ὡς λαμπὰς ἐκαίετο, does not bare the same resemblance to the Greek of Mal 4:1, καιομένη ὡς κλίβανος. Beentjes, "De stammen van Israël," 151; Hildesheim, *Bis dass ein Prophet*, 87; Leveque, "Le Portrait d'Élie," 228–229.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek ὁ ἀναλημφθεὶς ἐν λαίλαπι πυρὸς ἐν ἄρματι ἵππων πυρίνων 'You were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, / in a chariot with horses of fire,' is slightly different from the Hebrew הנלקח בסערה מעלה ובגודי [.....]א "In a storm he was taken upwards / and in a company of f[ire . . . ]."

<sup>5</sup> Skehan and Di Lella (*Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 534) along with the NRSV, follow the Greek, translating הכתוב with "it is written" (ὁ καταγραφείς). Benjamin G. Wright disagrees, translating הכתוב נכון לעת as "who was surely appointed for the time" (cf. נשב). He cites BDB (507), which translates Isa 4:3 (כל-הכתוב לחיים) as an eschatological reference: "all those enrolled (i.e. appointed) unto life" (*No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* [Septuagint and Cognate Studies 26; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989], 210).

given by Malachi: “before the . . . day of the LORD comes” (Mal 3:23).<sup>6</sup> He also reproduces the first half of Elijah’s mission, “to turn the hearts of fathers to their sons” (להשיב לב אבות) (על בנים), but he drops Malachi’s next line “and the hearts of the sons to their fathers” (ולב בנים), and adds “to restore the tribes of Israel” (ולחכינ שבט[י ישראל]) – a strong allusion to Isaiah 49:6.<sup>7</sup> By conflating Malachi’s and Isaiah’s words, Sirach associates the mission of the eschatological Elijah with the mission of the Servant of the Lord:<sup>8</sup>

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (NRSV; emphasis added)

While the *historical* Elijah is described in terms reminiscent of the fiery judgment of the day of the LORD (Mal 3:2, 19), the *eschatological* Elijah is described as an agent of Israel’s restoration.<sup>9</sup> Marcus Öhler observes that Sirach’s connection of Malachi with Isaiah may go beyond the restoration of the “tribes of Israel.” The LXX of Isaiah 49:6 translates “restore the survivors of Israel” (ונצורי ישראל להשיב) as “turn back the dispersion of Israel” (τὴν

<sup>6</sup> MS B is unfortunately damaged in v. 11. The Syriac has “before the coming of the day of the Lord” (*qdm dn’t ywmh dmry*), following the Heb. of Mal 3:23 more closely than the LXX, which has *πρὸ θυσμοῦ*. Skehan and Di Lella (*Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 531) judge the Syriac closer to the original over the Greek. Puech agrees, stating that the reconstruction *יום יהוה לפני בא* is an “acceptable” reconstruction (“Ben Sira 48:11 et la Résurrection,” 82).

<sup>7</sup> While LXX Isa 49:6 reads *τοῦ στῆσαι τὰς φυλὰς Ἰακωβ*; MT *להקים את־שבטי יעקב*. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> transposes *ישראל* with *יעקב* in the next clause. Sirach’s *כון* is virtually synonymous with Isaiah’s *קון*, according to J. D. Martin (“Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers,” 112). The *shin* before the gap and the *lamed* at the end of the line indicate that the Hebrew was originally *שבט[י ישראל]* (Skehan & Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 531). Thus MS B is most likely alluding to Isaiah. Beentjes holds that Sirach uses “Israel” to bring attention to the restoration of the northern tribes (“De stammen van Israël,” 152). On the other hand, Sirach could be another witness to the reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Van Peursen (292) notes that the Syriac differs from both the Hebrew and Greek of Sir 48:10 and Isa 49:6, reading “et pour apporter des bonnes nouvelles aux tribus de Jacob” (*wlmsbrw lšbt y’qwb*). He contends that this is a Christian interpolation that associates the text with John the Baptist. In Luke 3:18 (a text describing the ministry of John the Baptist) the Syriac translates *εὐηγγελίζετο* with *msbr*.

<sup>8</sup> Beentjes, “De stammen van Israël,” 153.

<sup>9</sup> Hildesheim (*Bis dass ein Prophet*, 121) states that Sirach turns Malachi’s prophecy into a statement of blessing rather than one of judgment. Both judgment and blessing are present in Malachi. He describes the day of the LORD as both weal (3:19–20; ET 4:1–2) and woe (3:18, 23–24; LXX 3:18, 22–23; ET 4:5–6).

διασπορὰν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπιστρέψαι).<sup>10</sup> This use of ἐπιστρέφω in the LXX may have led Sirach to replace ἀποκαταστήσει in LXX Mal 3:23 with ἐπιστρέψαι. Öhler ponders, “Perhaps the author understood the reversal of hearts as the return from the Diaspora?”<sup>11</sup>

Sirach makes a similar allusion to Isaiah 49:6 in a prayer for Israel’s deliverance (ET 36:1–22): Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning (NRSV 36:13, 16; MS B 36:11).<sup>12</sup> The entire prayer is drenched in eschatological fervor. It calls upon Israel’s God to “Hasten the day, and remember the appointed time” (v. 10). It also pleads for the fulfillment of the prophecies spoken in his name so that the prophets may be found trustworthy (vv. 21–22). Thus Sirach calls for the eschatological restoration of God’s people in prayer (ET 36:1–22), and later uses similar language to describe the restoration of Israel associated with Elijah’s return (48:10).

The juxtaposition of Malachi’s prophecy concerning Elijah with Isaiah’s description of the Servant’s task does not indicate that Sirach viewed Elijah as a “messianic personality.”<sup>13</sup> The prophet’s association with the restoration of the twelve tribes may have been inferred from the contest at Mt. Carmel. There, Elijah repaired the altar of the LORD using “twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, ‘Israel shall be your name’” (1 Kgs 18:31; see vv. 30–32).

<sup>10</sup> Tg. Isa. (וגלות ישראל לאתבא) agrees with the LXX. The Kethiv וְנִצְרִי (adjective) is rendered with the Qere וְנִצְוִרִי (Qal passive participle). 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> supports the Kethiv. The BHS follows the Syriac (*nwr*ʾ, “the shoots of”) and emends the text to וְנִצְרִי. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Dallas: Word, 2002), 184.

<sup>11</sup> “Verstand der Autor vielleicht die Umkehrung der Herzen als Rückführung aus der Diaspora?” (*Elia im Neuen Testament*, 8, n. 37).

<sup>12</sup> MS B: אֲסוּף כָּל שְׁבֵטֵי יַעֲקֹב; LXX: συνάγαγε πάσας φυλὰς Ἰακωβ. Besides the reference to the “tribes of Jacob,” the parallels are not exact between Sirach and Isaiah. Beentjes, however, notes similar vocabulary between Sirach and Isa 49:1–6 that would suggest that Sirach was alluding to Isaiah: אֲסוּף (Isa 49:5/Sir 36:11); פֶּאֱלָה (Isa 49:4/Sir 36:16); and Jacob/Israel used in parallel (Isa 49:5–6 and Sir 36:11–12). Note also the shared themes of the exodus/wilderness wanderings (Isa 48:20–21/Sir 36:6) and the renewed occupancy of the land (Isa 49:8/Sir 36:11; “Relations between Ben Sira and the Book of Isaiah: Some Methodical Observations,” in *The Book of Isaiah/Le livre d’Isaïe* [ed. Jacques Vermeylen; BETL 81; Leuven: University Press, 1989], 158–159.

<sup>13</sup> Strack and Billerbeck assert that to Sirach Elijah is a “messianische Persönlichkeit” (Str-B 4.780).

He then had four jars of water poured three times upon the altar, wood, and sacrifice (vv. 33–35). In his prayer, he addresses the LORD as “God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel” (v. 36), rather than the formulaic “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”<sup>14</sup> These factors suggest that Elijah was symbolically demonstrating the whole-hearted loyalty to YHWH that should have characterized all twelve tribes. Martin states that in using imagery from Isaiah 49, Sirach borrows “language describing a redemptive function,” and uses it “to amplify the functions of the returning Elijah.”<sup>15</sup> Given Elijah’s show of twelve-tribe nationalism on Carmel, he may be using language describing *historical* function to describe the mission of the eschatological Elijah as well.

The association of Elijah with the themes of exile and restoration is not limited to this allusion to Isaiah. The emphasis is also evident in Sirach’s creative placement of the “Praise of Elijah” in Israel’s history—*after* the deportation of Northern Israel:

Then Jeroboam son of Nebat led Israel into sin  
and started Ephraim on its sinful ways.  
Their sins increased more and more,  
until they were exiled from their land.  
For they sought out every kind of wickedness,  
until vengeance came upon them.  
Then Elijah arose, a prophet like fire, . . . (47:23c–48:1a NRSV)

This presents a historical impossibility, as Elijah lived 150 years *before* the fall of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Still, the given sequence of events is not evidence of slipshod chronology. Rather Sirach

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<sup>14</sup> The combination of “Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” occurs in only three places other than Elijah’s prayer, one of which is in Moses’ prayer for God’s mercy on Israel after their worship of the golden calf (Exod 32:13; 1 Chron 29:18; 2 Chron 30:6). This should be contrasted with the nineteen uses of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Gen 50:24; Exod 2:24; 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5; 6:3, 8; 33:1; Num 32:11; Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:12; 30:20; 34:4; 2 Kgs 13:23; Jer 33:26).

<sup>15</sup> J. D. Martin, “A Messianic Perspective,” 121, n. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Elijah ministered during the reigns of Ahab (869–850 BC; 1 Kgs 16:28–22:40) and Ahaziah (850–849 BC; 1 Kgs 22:40–2 Kgs 1:18); while Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722/1 BC, during the reign of Hoshea (732–724). John Bright, *A History of Israel* (3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 241–248, 275–276.



intentionally associates Elijah's fight against Israel's apostasy with her future exile. This is all the more evident in vv. 15–16, following his "Praise of Elisha" (vv. 12–14):

Despite all this the people did not repent,  
nor did they forsake their sins,  
until they were carried off as plunder from their land,  
and were scattered over all the earth.  
Some of them did what was right,  
but others sinned more and more.

Thus, Sirach's account of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha are nestled within an *inclusio* pointing to Israel's sin as the cause of her exile. The country would remain in her sins in spite of Elijah's fiery ministry, but restoration and repentance would mark the prophet's return.<sup>17</sup> The stark contrast between Israel's past sin and her future repentance and restoration is further enforced by the hope framed by 47:22 and 48:15.<sup>18</sup>

So he gave a remnant to Jacob,  
and to David a root from his own family. (47:22)  
.....  
The people were left very few in number,  
but with a ruler from the house of David. (48:15)

Thus, in spite of Israel's rebellion and subsequent exile, attention is drawn to God's gracious preservation of the house of David along with a faithful remnant.<sup>19</sup> Given this *implicit* association of Elijah's ministry with both exile and hope of restoration, it is no surprise that Sirach *explicitly* associates the eschatological Elijah with the restoration of the "tribes of Israel" (48:10).

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<sup>17</sup> Hildesheim, *Bis dass ein Prophet*, 121.

<sup>18</sup> Beentjes, "De stammen van Israël," 154, n. 18.

<sup>19</sup> The close association of the exile with the apostasy during Elijah's ministry is also found in 2 Bar. 62:1–8. Here "the curse of Jezebel, and the idolatry which Israel practiced at the time, and the withholding of the rain" (vv. 2–5) are nestled immediately between the account of Jeroboam's idolatry (vv. 1–2; cf. Sir 47:23–24) and the "exile which befell the nine and a half tribes because they lived in many sins" (v. 5). A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1:642.

Elijah's eschatological task is developed beyond the political restoration of Israel. The same prophet who raised the widow's son (Sir 48:5; 1 Kgs 17:21–22) is connected with future resurrection. "Happy are those who saw you and were adorned with your love! For we also shall surely live" (NRSV). Unfortunately, MS B is damaged. The reconstruction below is plausibly proposed by Émile Puech:

אשר ראך ומת	μακάριοι οἱ ἰδόντες σε
כ[י] תתן ח[י]ים [וי]חיה	καὶ οἱ ἐν ἀγαπήσει κεκοιμημένοι·
	καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ζωῇ ζησόμεθα.

Thus, the Hebrew could be translated "Blessed is he who sees you and dies, for you give life and he will live."<sup>20</sup> Puech sees a progression in Sirach's presentation of Elijah's mission. The prophet "raised a corpse from death and from Hades" (v. 5). He was "taken up by a whirlwind of fire" (v. 9), and he is promised to turn back the wrath of God, effect the conversion of hearts and restore the tribes of Israel (v. 10). The association of prophet with future resurrection would be consistent with the biblical picture of Elijah. It is also consistent with later Jewish tradition: "... the resurrection of the dead comes by the hand of Elijah the prophet" (וְהַתְחִיית הַמֵּתִים בְּאֵל יָדֵי אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא; *m. Soṭah* 19:15; cf. *y. Šabb.* 1:15; *Song. Rab.* 1:9; *b. Sanh.* 113a). While Puech denies that Sirach is referring to a "general resurrection." He states that "those righteous who see the return of Elijah are assured to live again."<sup>21</sup> Sirach recasts the Elijah narrative using Malachi's description of the day of the LORD. He also develops the tradition concerning the return of Elijah to include the

<sup>20</sup> Puech translates his reconstruction as: "Heureux qui te verra avant de mourir c[ar] tu rendras la v[i]e[et il] (re)viv[ra]" ("Ben Sira 48:11," 87).

<sup>21</sup> "Sans doute, il n'est pas question de résurrection générale, ni de celle de tous les justes, mais de justes qui verront le retour d'Elie et sont ainsi assurés de revivre" ("Ben Sira 48:11," 87). J. J. Collins denies the Hebrew text contains any mention of the resurrection "in view of Sirach's emphatic insistence on the finality of death elsewhere (14:11–19; 38:21–22; 41:4)" (*Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989], 95–96).

restoration of the exiled tribes of Israel and the prophet's association with future resurrection.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Elijah in 4QMessianicApocalypse (4Q521)***

Elijah is explicitly mentioned only a few times in the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>23</sup> *4QVision<sup>b</sup> ar* (4Q558), a highly fragmentary text, contains a brief but explicit reference to the prophet's return, "to you I will send Elijah, befo[re...]" ([. . .] **לכן אשלח לאליה קד** [ס]; 1 ii 4).<sup>24</sup> Another fragmentary text, *4QParaphrase Kings* (4Q382), retells part of the Elijah narratives, mentioning Ahab, Jezebel, and Obadiah (frag. 1); Elijah's confrontation with Ahab, "the troubler of Israel" (frag. 3); as well as Elijah's and Elisha's journey to Jericho prior to Elijah's ascension (frags. 9+11). Frag. 31 also contains a possible allusion to the eschatological return of Elijah, referring "[. . .] to the time when a mighty man will rise [. . .]."<sup>25</sup>

*4QMessianicApocalypse* (4Q521) also describes a prophetic figure who could quite possibly be identified with the eschatological Elijah.<sup>26</sup> This text has been the subject of

<sup>22</sup> See also *Sib. Or.* 2:185, where the return of "the Thesbite, driving a heavenly chariot" will be preceded by the return of the exiled ten tribes (2:170; John J. Collins, "The Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1:349). Matthew A. Jackson-McCabe notes the similarity with Sir 48, though unlike Sirach's version Elijah is not the agent of the twelve tribe restoration, but rather returns afterward ("Messiah," 722, n. 91).

<sup>23</sup> While scholars have speculated on the role of Elijah in several texts in Qumran, this survey will focus only on those passages which explicitly mention Elijah, or allude to Malachi's prophecy of his return. Translations and texts of the DSS are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>24</sup> DSSSE 2:1114-1115. The preceding line (1 ii 3) reads [. . .] **האנ**, "the eighth as an elected one. And see, I [. . .]," while the following line (1 ii 5) reads [. . .] **פרקא וזי קיא**, "po[w]er, lightning and met[eors . . .]." John J. Collins suggests that 1 ii 5 could be a sign of the day of the Lord. The text is too fragmentary to know for sure ("The Works of the Messiah," *DSD* 1 [1994]: 106).

<sup>25</sup> DSSSE 2:764-765. Christopher J. Patrick Davis contends that 4Q382 "is best regarded as an apocalyptic paraphrase that expounded upon Elijah's spectacular legacy as a prophet, and forecasted his participation in the Last Days" ("4Q382, Elijah and the Dead Sea Scrolls," [M.A. thesis, Trinity Western University, 2002], 171). Davis follows a similar interpretation of 4Q382 made by Michael O. Wise in Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation with Commentary* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 347-348.

<sup>26</sup> DSSSE 2:1044-1047. John J. Collins, "Works of the Messiah." See also his monograph, *The Scepter and the Star* (ABRL; New York: Double Day, 1995), 116-122.

scrutiny on account of its similarity with the Gospels—specifically its similarity to Jesus’ answer to the question: “Are you the one, or are we to wait for another?” (Luke 7:21):

Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.  
(Luke 7:22–23 || Matt 11:4–5)

This “Messianic Apocalypse” is important for this study in that it could possibly associate the control of the weather and the restoration of the twelve tribes with the eschatological Elijah. Given the above discussion of Sirach 48:10 (as well as the discussion below of Luke 4:16–30), it is also interesting that the document associates the mission of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 61 with the mission of Elijah to “turn the hearts of the fathers towards their sons.”

Frag. 2, col. ii has been the center of debate:

[for the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one, 2 [and all th]at is in them will not turn away from the precepts of the holy ones. 3 Strengthen yourselves, you who are seeking the Lord, in his service! *Blank* 4 Will you not in this encounter the Lord, all those who hope in their heart? 5 For the Lord will consider the pious, and call the righteous by name, 6 and his spirit will hover upon the poor, and he will renew the faithful with his strength. 7 For he will honour the pious upon the throne of an eternal kingdom, 8 freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twis[t]ed. 9 And for[e]ver shall I cling [to those who h]ope, and in his mercy [. . .] 10 and the fru[it of . . .] . . . not be delayed. 11 And the Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed, just as he sa[id,] 12 [for] he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the poor 13 and [. . .] . . . [ . . . ] he will lead the [. . .] . . . and enrich the hungry. 14 [. . .] and all . . . [ . . . ] (DSSSE 2:1044–1055)

The text opens with the declaration, “[for the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one(s).” Immediately difficulties arise with this text, as משיחו can be vocalized either as the singular “his anointed one” (מְשִׁיחוֹ) or the plural “his anointed ones” (מְשִׁיחֵי);

cf. CD ii 12).<sup>27</sup> Florentino García Martínez notes that a different form (משיחיה) is given in viii 9 that is clearly plural, therefore משיחו most likely refers to a single “anointed one.”<sup>28</sup> The lines that follow contain allusions to several Old Testament texts. “Freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twis[t]ed” (2 ii 8) alludes to Psalm 146:7–8, while the proclamation of the good news to the poor (ענוים יבשר; 2 ii 12) alludes to Isaiah 61:1. This “catalog of wonders” also includes an allusion to the resurrection of the dead (2 ii 12; 7+5 ii 6; cf. Isa 26:19).<sup>29</sup> While the Lord is the subject of lines 5–6, both John J. Collins and Émile Puech agree that the anointed one of line 1 is still the agent of the deliverance described in the rest of col. 2.<sup>30</sup> Collins suggests that “the messiah whom heaven and earth will obey is an anointed eschatological prophet, either Elijah or a prophet like Elijah.”<sup>31</sup> The obedience of “the heavens and the earth” may allude to Elijah’s ability to shut the sky. In addition, resurrection is associated with both the historical and eschatological mission of the prophet (2 ii 12; cf. 1 Kgs 17:21–22; *m. Soṭa* 9:15; *y. Šeqal.* 3:3; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 76a).<sup>32</sup>

This identification of the “anointed one” with Elijah is not without its critics. Jean Duham notes the ambiguity of the obedience of “the heavens and the earth” (2 ii 1), and that it could allude to the introduction to the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1). Thus, the anointed

<sup>27</sup> Émile Puech, “Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521 and Qumran Messianism,” in *Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts and Reformulated Issues* (eds. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich; STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 554.

<sup>28</sup> Florentino García Martínez and Julio Trebolle Barrera, *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 169.

<sup>29</sup> Puech, “Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521,” 556.

<sup>30</sup> John J. Collins, “The Works of the Messiah,” 100; Émile Puech, “Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521,” 558. See also Jean Duham, “Le Messie et les Saints dans un Fragment Apocalyptique de Qumrân (4Q521),” in *Ce Dieu qui Vient* (ed. Raymond Kuntzmann; LD 159; Paris: du Cerf, 1995), 265–274; John C. Poirier, “The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran,” *DSD* 10 (2003): 221–242.

<sup>31</sup> Collins, “Works of the Messiah,” 102; citing CD 2:12; 6:1; 1QM 11:17, where the prophets are referred to as “anointed ones.”

<sup>32</sup> Collins, “Works of the Messiah,” 102. Note also Sirach’s “Praise of Elijah,” specifically 48:5, 11. See above.

one could refer to Moses or a future prophet like Moses.<sup>33</sup> Puech argues against Collins' conclusions, stating that prophets were not generally "anointed" (with the *single* exception in 1 Kgs 19:16b—where Elijah is instructed to anoint Elisha as his successor). Rather the "anointed one" refers to an eschatological high priest. He contends that 2 iii 2 refers not to the "messiah" of 2 ii 1, but rather to Elijah as the herald of a Davidic messianic scion. This conclusion is based in part on his reconstruction of 2 iii 6. He contends that this last line of the column should be restored as **וואת שבט[ו] ירממו**, "and [his] scepter, and they will exalt."<sup>34</sup> Collins disagrees, pointing out that it is unclear whether the second letter of the word is either **ט** or **מ**, and that if it is a **ט**, as Puech insists, it would be better to take **שבט** as "tribe(s)." This would be in keeping with Sir 48:10, where Elijah is said to "restore the tribes of Israel" (**להכין שבטי ישראל**; see above).<sup>35</sup>

Collins' assessment gains support from allusions to Malachi's prophecy found within the document. The most notable is an allusion to the prophecy of Elijah's return: "the fathers will return towards the sons" (**באים אבות על בנים**; 2 iii 2).<sup>36</sup> In addition, Puech reconstructs 14.2 as **בין צדי[ק] לרש[ע]**, presenting an allusion to Malachi's promise, "you shall see the difference *between the righteous and the wicked*" (**וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע**; 3:18).<sup>37</sup> Fainter echoes of Malachi may exist as well. Puech suggests that **חק** in 2 iii 1 alludes

<sup>33</sup> Duham, 169.

<sup>34</sup> Puech, "Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521," 559–561.

<sup>35</sup> Collins, "Works of the Messiah," 103. Puech contends that the reconstruction suggested by Collins (**ואת ים תמכו שבט[ו]** "and the tribes they have seized[.]" ) simply cannot fit the *lacuna* ("Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521," 559, n. 45).

<sup>36</sup> The quotation of Mal 3:24 is preceded with **נכון** "it is sure," which is quite similar to **נכון לעת** "prepared for a time"—the words Sirach uses to introduce the same passage (48:10). Collins, "Works of the Messiah," 103.

<sup>37</sup> Émile Puech, "4QApocalypse messianique," in *Qumrân Grotte 4 XVIII: Textes Hébreux (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579)* (ed. Émile Puech; DJD 25; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 34. See David M. Miller's helpful summary of Malachi in 4Q521 on pages 8–9 in "The Messenger, the Lord, and the Coming Judgement in the Reception History of Malachi 3," *NTS* 53 (2007): 1–16.

to “the statutes and ordinances” (חקים ומשפטים) of Mal 3:22. “The blessing of the Lord in his favor” (ברכת אדני ברצונו; 2 iii 3) may allude to Malachi, based on the presence of ברכה in 3:10 and רצון in 2:13; while “those who seek the Lord in his service” (מבקשי אדני) (האדון אשר-אתם) (2 ii 3) may reference “the Lord whom you are seeking” (מבקשים) in Malachi 3:1.<sup>38</sup>

If Collins’ interpretation is correct, then 4Q521 could associate the restoration of the tribes of Israel with the ministry of Elijah (though whether Elijah is the agent of this restoration is unclear). His suggestion that the obedience of “heaven and earth” refers to Elijah’s control of the rain is interesting, as it would indicate a blending of Elijah’s historical role with the prophet’s eschatological mission. Such an association is drawn in rabbinic literature:

You will find that the Holy One, blessed be He, anticipated in this world through the agency of the righteous everything that He will do in the Hereafter. Thus God will resurrect the dead, and Elijah resurrected the dead; God shuts up the rain, and Elijah shut up the rain; God will bless the little [in quantity], and Elijah blessed the little [in quantity]. (*Gen. Rab.* 77.1)<sup>39</sup>

Both the prophet’s ability to resurrect the dead and “shut up the rain” serve as precedent for God’s saving acts in “the Hereafter” (בעולם).

The Qumran corpus does not put much explicit emphasis on either the eschatological or the historical Elijah. 4Q521 does reference Malachi’s prophecy, and if the “anointed one” refers to an eschatological prophet like Elijah, then it also associates Elijah’s eschatological mission as given in Malachi with the mission of the Servant in Isaiah

<sup>38</sup> Miller, “The Messenger,” 9.

<sup>39</sup> Translations of the *Midrash Rabbah* unless otherwise noted, are from H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabbah* (3rd ed. 10 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1983).

61. As seen below, this is significant, in that Jesus both quotes from Isaiah 61 and characterizes his ministry after Elijah and Elisha in his sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30).

### ***Elijah in Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Josephus***

Given the fragmentary nature of the text, the identification of the “anointed one” in 4Q521 cannot be made for sure. Collins associates the “anointed one” with an eschatological prophet like Elijah, while Puech prefers an identification with an anointed priestly figure. There is evidence, however, that Elijah filled a dual role of both prophet *and* priest in early Judaism. While it is not particularly important for this thesis that Elijah filled such a role, several of the contexts in which Elijah is associated with the priesthood bring together elements of both the Elijah narrative and Malachi’s prophecy.

The earliest account of Elijah as a priest is found in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 48; here Phinehas is equated with Elijah:<sup>40</sup>

And in that time Phinehas laid himself down to die, and the LORD said to him, “Behold you have passed the 120 years that have been established for every man. And now rise up and go from here and dwell in Danaben on the mountain and dwell there many years. And *I will command* my eagle, and *he will nourish* you *there*, and you will not come down to mankind until the time arrives and you will be tested in that time; and you will shut up the heaven then, and by your mouth it will be opened up. And afterward you will be lifted up into the place where those who were before you were lifted up, and you will be there until I remember the world. Then I will make you all come, and you will taste what is death. (L.A.B. 48:1)<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Daniel J. Harrington holds that this text was probably penned in the late first century AD (“Pseudo-Philo,” *OTP* 2:299).

<sup>41</sup> Translation in Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” *OTP* 2:362. See also Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin Text and English Translations* (2 vols.; ALGHJ 31; Leiden: Brill, 1996); Fredrick J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Latin text according to Daniel J. Harrington and Jacques Cazeaux, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* (2 vols. SC 229; Paris: du Cerf, 1976), 1:321–322; see also their commentary on ch. 48 (2:208–211). Daniel J. Harrington presents a Hebrew retroversion based on the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* in *The Hebrew Fragments of Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum Preserved in the Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (SBLTT 3; Pseudepigrapha Series 3; Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 70–71.



While Elijah's name is not explicitly mentioned, the future plan of Phinehas' life contains several parallels with the Elijah cycle that make the identification undeniable. First, he is told to dwell on a mountain where he will be fed by an eagle.<sup>42</sup> Though referring to a bird of a different feather, *Pseudo-Philo* alludes to the ravens sent to feed Elijah at Cherith (1 Kgs 17:4).<sup>43</sup> Once Phinehas has returned to humanity, he is given the power to pronounce both drought and rain (*tu claudus celum tunc, et in ore tuo aperietur*; 1 Kgs 17:1; 18:41–45). He is then told by God that he will ascend twice—first at the present time in the narrative, and again after his ministry as Elijah (2 Kgs 2:1–12). In his ascension, Phinehas is to be “lifted up to a place” to which “those who were before” him were “lifted up.”<sup>44</sup> Next, Phinehas and all those who have previously been “lifted up” are said to one day return in order to “taste what is death.”<sup>45</sup>

Phinehas' final return (as Elijah) provides an explicit eschatological allusion. An *implicit* eschatological reference possibly exists in *Pseudo-Philo*'s description of Phinehas' initial return as Elijah. It is stated that Phinehas will be isolated from humanity “until the time arrives” (*quousque superveniat tempus*). While surely he is not saying that Phinehas' initial return as Elijah is an “eschatological return,” he is perhaps using eschatological

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<sup>42</sup> Jacobson notes that “now rise up and go from here” (*nunc exsurge et vade hinc*) alludes to “withdraw from here and go” (*recede hinc et vade*) in 1 Kgs 17:3. He also notes that Phinehas' ascent up a mountain indicates that Phinehas would spend the life of a hermit, remote from the rest of Israel. He makes reference, however, to 2 Bar. 76:2–3, where Baruch's ascent up a mountain seems equivalent to a heavenly ascension (A *Commentary*, 2:1061).

<sup>43</sup> It was scandalous to later Jewish exegetes that God would allow Elijah to be fed by ravens, as they were unclean (Lev 11:15; Deut 14:14; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 33.5 on Gen 8:7). This may explain why *L.A.B.* replaces “raven” with “eagle.” God himself is likened to an eagle in his care for Israel (Exod 19:4; Deut 32:11). The *Chronicle of Jerahmeel* makes the text conform more closely to the Elijah cycle by adding “ravens” (העֲרָבִים) in addition to eagles (Harrington, *Hebrew Fragments*, 70–71).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. 4 Ezra 6:26, where “those who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death.” Michael Stone lists Enoch (Gen 5:24), Ezra (4 Ezra 14:9, 49), and Baruch (2 Bar. 13:3, et al.; *Fourth Ezra* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990], 172).

<sup>45</sup> Jacobson (*A Commentary*, 1:1063) notes that the expression “taste death” is used elsewhere (Matt 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; John 8:52; Heb 2:9; 4 Ezra 6:76). He also notes Elijah is said to not “taste death” in *Gen. Rab.* 21.5.

language to describe the beginning of the prophet's ministry in northern Israel.<sup>46</sup>

"Appointed time" is an important concept in *L.A.B.* God reveals a seven-period schema of history, where at the time of Moses' death, four and a half times have already passed, and two and a half remain (19:10–15). After the flood, God promises humanity to never again destroy the world with rain. Instead, he will judge humanity "by famine or by sword or by fire or by death," and the rebellious "will be scattered to uninhabited places" . . . "until the appointed times are fulfilled" (*donec compleantur tempora*; 3:9). This promise of limited postdiluvian judgment immediately precedes a description of final judgment, resurrection and re-creation that will occur "when the years appointed for the world have been fulfilled" (*Cum autem completi fuerint anni seculi*; 3:10).<sup>47</sup> The connection between Phinehas' return as Elijah and the earlier post-flood narrative is strengthened by the description of the sign of the rainbow:

And then they began to work the land and to sow upon it. And when the land was dry, its inhabitants cried out to the LORD; and he heard them and gave rain in abundance. And it happened that, when the rain descended upon the earth, the bow appeared in the cloud. And those inhabiting the earth saw this memorial of the covenant and fell upon their faces and made sacrifices and offered burnt offerings to the LORD. (4:5)<sup>48</sup>

Jacobson holds that this passage adapts and conflates Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:35–36) and Israel's response when Elijah's sacrifice was consumed by fire on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:39)—both contexts in which the prayer for rain is central.<sup>49</sup> The

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<sup>46</sup> Jacobson (*A Commentary*, 2:1062) notes that the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* translates *tempore* with זמן. This would suggest that the Hebrew translator viewed Phinehas' return eschatologically. Jacobson holds that *tempus* only means "at the appointed time," and refers to nothing more than Phinehas' return as Elijah.

<sup>47</sup> Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2:307.

<sup>48</sup> Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2:308.

<sup>49</sup> Jacobson, *A Commentary*, 1:338.

*Pluvia super terram* (*L.A.B.* 4:5)

*pluviam super terram* (1 Kgs 8:36)

*cedierunt in faciem suam et immolaverunt offerntes holocaustomata Domino* (*L.A.B.* 4:5)

possibility of an eschatological allusion in 48:1 may be strengthened as *L.A.B.* states Phinehas “will be tested in that time” (*proberis in tempore*; cf. Jas 1:2–4, 12).<sup>50</sup> Given the above evidence, it is plausible that *L.A.B.* associates Elijah’s fiery eschatological mission with his first ministry in a manner similar to Sirach 48:1.<sup>51</sup>

*L.A.B.* may contain another allusion to eschatological traditions associated with the prophet Elijah in its version of Joshua’s covenant renewal ceremony. There God promises:

And now, if you listen to your fathers, . . . I will command the rain and the dew, and they will be abundant for you during your lifetime. But also at the end of the lot of each one of you will be life eternal, for you and your seed, and I will take your souls and store them in peace until the time allotted the world be complete (*quousque compleatur tempus seculi*). And I will restore you to your fathers and your fathers to you (*Et reddam vos patribus vestris et patres vestros vobis*), and they will know through you that I have not chosen you in vain. (*L.A.B.* 23:12–13)<sup>52</sup>

Here *L.A.B.* juxtaposes the promise of rain and eternal life with the restoration of fathers and children. This last promise alludes to Elijah’s eschatological mission to “turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents” (Mal 3:24).<sup>53</sup> While Elijah is not mentioned by name in *L.A.B.*, elements of both the historical and eschatological traditions surrounding the prophet are found in the priestly figure of Phinehas.

The tradition that Elijah is identical to Phinehas is not unique to *L.A.B.* It is also present in several rabbinic writings, particularly *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.<sup>54</sup> In a manner

*cecidit in faciem suam et ait Dominus ipse est Deus Dominus ipse est Deus* (1 Kgs 18:39)

<sup>50</sup> Though James was most likely not familiar with *L.A.B.*, it is interesting to note that Phinehas’ ministry as Elijah is viewed as a *test*.

<sup>51</sup> See the above discussion of Sir 48:1. Note also the use of *qui inscriptus es indiciis temporum* / ὁ καταγραφείς ἐν ἐλεγμοῖς εἰς καιροῦς to introduce Elijah’s eschatological mission in Sir 48:10.

<sup>52</sup> Covenant faithfulness results in plentiful rain throughout *L.A.B.* (11:19; 13:7; 44:10). Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 36.

<sup>53</sup> Jacobson (*A Commentary*, 2:729) notes this connection; though he concludes that even if the phrase is derived from Malachi, it is being used without the eschatological connotation.

<sup>54</sup> *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod* 4:13; 6:18; 40:10; *Deut* 30:4; 33:11; *Sipre* § 131; *Num. Rab.* 21.4; *Pirq. R. El.* §§ 29, 47; *Yalq. Šimeoni* on Num 25. See also Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.7; also A. Spiro, “The Ascension of Phinehas,” *PAAJR* 22 (1953): 91–114; Robert Hayward, “Phinehas—the same as Elijah: the Origins of a Rabbinic Tradition,” *JJS* 29 (1978): 23–34; William Klassen, “Jesus and Phineas [sic]: A Rejected Role Model,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1986* (SBLSP 25; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 491–500; Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom*

similar to *L.A.B.*, *Pseudo-Jonathan* conflates both the eschatological and historical traditions concerning Elijah, as the Targum equates the zealous priest with the zealous prophet.<sup>55</sup>

While Pseudo-Philo gives no reason for his equation of Phinehas with Elijah, *Pseudo-Jonathan* does:

The zealous Phinehas bar Eleazar bar Aaron, the priest, has turned aside my anger from the Israelites because when zealous with my zeal *he killed the sinners* among them; and *because of him* I did not destroy the Israelites in my zealousness. *In an oath I say to him in my name: Behold, I have decreed to him my covenant of peace, and I will make him an angel of the covenant, and he shall live eternally, To announce the redemption at the end of days.* (Tg. Ps.-J. Num 25:11–12)<sup>56</sup>

Here, Phinehas is rewarded by God for his zeal in executing an apostate Israelite and his Moabite consort. The blessing pronounced over Phinehas in the biblical text included a “covenant of peace” (ברית שלום; v. 11), and a perpetual covenant of priesthood (ברית כהנת עולם; v. 13). The *meturgeman* associates this “covenant of peace” with the “covenant of life and peace” (ברית . . . החיים והשלום) given to Levi in Malachi 2:4–5. The prophet later identifies Levi as the “messenger of the LORD of hosts” (מלאך יהוה-צבאות; v. 7). It is only a short midrashic jump to identify the “messenger of the covenant” (מלאך הברית; 3:1), and hence *Elijah* (3:23), with Phinehas. A second connection exists between Phinehas

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*Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* (trans. David Smith; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 149–174; Rudolf Meyer, “‘Elia’ und ‘Ahab’ (Tg. Ps.-Jon. zu Deut. 33.11),” in *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel* (eds. Otto Betz, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1963), 356–368; Roger Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums: A Study on the Targumic Interpretations of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33* (AAA.A 64.1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1986), 165–178.

<sup>55</sup> The Targum’s date of composition poses a problem, as it certainly contains late traditions (e. g. mention of Muhammad’s daughter and wife in Gen 21:21 and Constantinople in Num 24:19, 24; see Syrén, *Blessings in the Targum*, 170). Given the identification of Phinehas with Elijah in *L.A.B.*, it is probable that *Pseudo-Jonathan* may reflect early tradition that escaped later rabbinic censure. Ernest G. Clark, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*, 100, n. 60. See also David George Clark, *Elijah the Eschatological High Priest*, 124–165.

<sup>56</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Targum translations are from: Martin McNamara, Robert Hayward and Michael Maher, *Targum Neofiti 1, Exodus and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Exodus* (ArBib 2; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1987); Ernest G. Clarke and Shirley Magder, *Targum Neofiti 1, Numbers and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Numbers* (ArBib 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995); Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy* (ArBib 5B; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998).

and Elijah, as both are known for their zealous execution of idolaters (compare Num 25:11 with 1 Kgs 19:10–14).<sup>57</sup> Finally, Elijah’s offering of sacrifices on Mt. Carmel casts him in a priestly role.

In the above targum, Phinehas is said to “*to announce the redemption at the end of the days*” (למבשרא גאולתא בסוף יומיא). This may allude to the Servant’s announcement of “good news to the poor” in Isaiah 61:1 (לבשר עניים; Tg. = לבשרא ענותניא). Given this connection, James A. Sanders suggests that the *meturgeman* connects the eschatological mission of Elijah with that of the Servant of the LORD.<sup>58</sup> If this is so, then it provides an interesting parallel to Sirach, Luke, and perhaps 4Q521, where allusions to either the historical Elijah or the prophecy of his return are associated with allusions to Isaiah’s Servant Song (Isa 49:6 in Sir 48:10; Isa 61:1–2 in Luke 4:18–19 and 4Q521).

Other passages in *Pseudo-Jonathan* explicitly refer to Elijah as “priest” or “high priest” (Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 6:18; 40:10; Deut 30:4; 33:11).<sup>59</sup> These Targums emphasize Elijah’s eschatological role and his mission to “the exiles of Israel.” *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Deuteronomy 30:4 explicitly states that even though Israel’s dispersal “will be to the heavens, there will *the Memra* of the Lord gather [Israel] *through the mediation of Elijah, the great priest.*” As in Sirach 48:10, Elijah’s mission is closely associated with the end of the exile, though here he is explicitly the agent of restoration.

<sup>57</sup> Hayward “Phinehas—the same as Elijah,” 23. In Mattathias’ speech encouraging “zeal for the law” both Phinehas and Elijah are described as ζηλωσαι ζήλον (1 Macc 2:50–58; see also v. 26).

<sup>58</sup> James A. Sanders, “From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4,” in *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults* (ed. Jacob Neusner; SJLA 12; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 88. Sanders notes the association between this Targum and Isaiah 61, but he does not specify where the connection lays.

<sup>59</sup> In a manner similar to the expansion of Num 25:11–12, Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 4:13 states that Phinehas is to be sent at the end of days (בסוף יומיא), without explicitly stating he is Elijah. The Tg. Neof. margin has “by the hand of the angel Messiah who is to be sent” (ביד מלאכא משיחה דעתיד למשתלחא). According to McNamara, Hayward and Maher (ArBib 2:23, n. u), “the angel” (מלאכא) is corrected to “the King” (מלכא).

A final Targum is worth mentioning as it associates a contemporary figure in early Judaism with the eschatological Elijah. It then uses characters from the Elijah cycle to describe the *allegorical* Elijah's enemies:

Bless, Lord, the possessions of the house of Levi who give a tenth of a tithe and accept with good will the sacrifice from the hand of Elijah, the priest, who offered up at Mount Carmel. Break the loins of Ahab, his enemy, and the (neck-)joint of the false prophets who arose against him so that there will not be for the enemies of Johanan, the high priest, a foot to stand on. (Tg. Ps.-J. Deut. 33:11).

Several options have been given for the identification of the characters mentioned in this targum.<sup>60</sup> John Meyer has identified Johanan, allegorically referred to as “Elijah the priest,” with John Hyrcanus I. He then identifies Ahab with the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran and the false prophets with the Pharisees.<sup>61</sup> Robert Hayward also identifies Elijah and Johanan with Hyrcanus I, though he states that Ahab and the false prophets refer to the Samaritans.<sup>62</sup> Though the exact identity of these figures is not pertinent to this thesis, the identification of Elijah with Hyrcanus is interesting. Hayward notes that Josephus ascribes Hyrcanus with the functions of ruler, priest and prophet (War 1.68). Hyrcanus’ campaign against the Samaritans, Idumea and Samaria could have been seen as the beginning of the restoration of the twelve tribes.<sup>63</sup> If this is the case, then Elijah is identified with an individual associated by contemporaries with the political restoration of Israel. Elijah’s eschatological role is conflated allegorically with his historical conflict with Ahab and the prophets of Baal. As in Sirach (48:1–11), *Pseudo-Philo* (ch. 48), and perhaps

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<sup>60</sup> See the helpful survey in Syrén, 166–168.

<sup>61</sup> Meyer, “‘Elia’ und ‘Ahab.’”

<sup>62</sup> Hayward, “Phinehas—the same as Elijah.”

<sup>63</sup> Hayward, “Phinehas—the same as Elijah,” 32

4Q521, elements of the historical and eschatological Elijah traditions are associated with each other.

It should be noted that Josephus, a contemporary of the author of *L.A.B.*, does not equate Elijah with Phinehas, nor does he associate the Elijah narratives with any eschatological expectation of the prophet (*Ant.* 8.319–354, 360–362; 9.20–28).<sup>64</sup> In his retelling of the Elijah narrative, Josephus makes several changes. He omits the miraculous elements of Elijah’s ascension, stating that Elijah only “disappeared” (ἡφανίσθη; *Ant.* 9:28);<sup>65</sup> ascribes the slaughter of the prophets of Baal to the people rather than Elijah himself (*Ant.* 8.343; cf. 1 Kgs 18:40); and deletes any mention of Elijah’s zeal at Horeb (*Ant.* 8.350; 352; cf. 1 Kgs 19:10).<sup>66</sup> He also suppresses Elisha’s mission to kill “whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu” (*Ant.* 8.352; cf. 1 Kgs 19:17). These changes to the biblical narrative are understandable given Josephus’ critique of the “zealot” uprisings against Rome that eventually led to the destruction of the temple (*J.W.* 1.9–12; 27–29).<sup>67</sup> The historian re-writes the Elijah cycle to disassociate the prophet from these factions. Josephus does not associate Elijah’s ministry in 1 Kings with Malachi’s prophecy of his return, but his

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<sup>64</sup> On the subject of Elijah in Josephus, see Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible* (JSJSup 58; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 291–306; *idem.*, “The Portrayal of Phinehas by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus,” *JQR* 92 (2002): 315–345; Otto Betz, “Das Problem des Wunders bei Flavius Josephus im Vergleich zum Wunderproblem bei den Rabbinen und im Johannesevangelium,” in *Josephus-Studien: Untersuchungen zu Josephus, dem antiken Judentum und dem Neuen Testament* (eds. Otto Betz, et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 23–44; *idem.*, “Miracles in the Writings of Flavius Josephus,” in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (eds. Louis H. Feldman & Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1987), 212–235, esp. 219–220.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher J. Patrick Davis (“4Q382,” 141, n. 125) notes that Josephus may have omitted Elijah’s parting of the Jordan River on account of its resemblance to Theudas’ claim to be able to part the Jordan (*Ant.* 20.97–98; cf. 2 Kgs 28). Josephus also downplays the miraculous nature of Israel’s crossing of the Jordan in Joshua 3 (cf. *Ant.* 5.16–19).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 2:50–58, where both Elijah and Phinehas are ζηλωσαι ζήλον, just as Elijah complains to God that he has been “very zealous” (ζηλῶν ἐζήλωκα/יְהִי אֵלֹהִים אֵלֵינוּ; 1 Kgs 19:10, 14).

<sup>67</sup> Betz, “Miracles,” 219.

ensorship of Elijah's life may reflect a reaction to popular views of the historical Elijah as a paradigm for zealous nationalism.

### ***Elijah in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra***

Sirach, 4Q521, *L.A.B.* and the Targums all recapitulate Malachi's prophecy of Elijah's return while blending both historical and eschatological traditions surrounding the prophet. A similar blending of traditions is present in early Jewish apocalyptic literature as well. Figures and events associated with the historic Elijah cycle are recounted in the second century AD apocalypse, *2 Baruch*.<sup>68</sup> Chapter 62 gives the explanation of Baruch's vision of alternating dark and bright clouds, symbolizing periods of judgment and blessing in Israel's history (ch. 53). The "seventh black waters" represents Israel's apostasy under Jeroboam and Jezebel.<sup>69</sup> Given the association of Jezebel with idolatry, the resultant "withholding of the rain" (62:4) that is described surely refers to Elijah's pronouncement of drought (1 Kgs 17:1), while the great famine that caused "women to eat the fruits of their womb" refers to the famine in the time of Elisha (2 Kgs 6:28–29). In a manner similar to Sirach, *2 Baruch* truncates history by placing the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians immediately after the ministries of these two prophets. Thus, the sins of Israel during the days of Elijah and his successor are closely associated with the judgment of exile.

While *2 Baruch* makes no mention of the anticipated return of Elijah, *4 Ezra*, a work closely related to *2 Baruch*, does blend both the expectation of Elijah's return with images from his historical ministry.<sup>70</sup> It has been noted that this apocalypse contains an explicit reference to Elijah's prayer for rain. It is one of only a few texts (including James) which

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<sup>68</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1:615–652.

<sup>69</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1:642.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," *OTP* 1:518–559.



explicitly associate the drought with Elijah's *prayer*.<sup>71</sup> Ezra refers to the prophet's prayer after an angel tells him that judgment will be final, and that nothing the righteous can do will change the fate of the wicked (7:104–105).<sup>72</sup> Ezra asks why this is the case, as the righteous have been able to successfully pray for the wicked in the past. He specifically mentions Elijah's prayers for both rain and the resurrection of the widow's son in his list of Israel's intercessors (7:106–111). While this text does not make reference to the eschatological Elijah traditions, the interchange between Ezra and the angel takes place in an apocalyptic context.

4 Ezra does make allusion to Malachi's prophecy in another context:

At that time friends shall make war on friends like enemies, and the earth and those who inhabit it will be terrified, and the springs of the fountains shall stand still, so that for three hours they shall not flow.

It shall be that whoever remains after all I have foretold to you shall be saved, and shall see my salvation and the end of my world. And they shall see the men who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death; and the heart of the earth's inhabitants shall be changed and converted to a different spirit. (4 Ezra 6:24–26)<sup>73</sup>

Scholars have noted here an allusion to the ascension of Elijah (along with Enoch and other biblical characters), as the apocalypse describes “the men who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death” (4:26).<sup>74</sup> Recently, Brandt Pitre cites this passage as evidence that early Judaism expected Elijah to return during a time of “interfamilial and interpersonal strife.”<sup>75</sup> Pitre's assumption is based on the promise of intergenerational reconciliation associated with Elijah (MT Mal 3:23). This task was later broadened for Elijah

<sup>71</sup> Peter H. Davids, “Pseudepigrapha,” 232.

<sup>72</sup> Bruce Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” *OTP* 1:540–541.

<sup>73</sup> Bruce Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” *OTP* 1:535.

<sup>74</sup> Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament*, 14; Stone, *4 Ezra*, 171; see the above discussion on *L.A.B.* 48:1.

<sup>75</sup> Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* (WUNT 2/204; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 182.

to include reconciliation between neighbors (LXX Mal 3:22) and the restoration of Israel (Sir 48:10). Pitre holds that 4 *Ezra* alludes to this interpersonal strife, by describing the end as a time when “friends shall make war on friends like enemies.” The return of those who “have not tasted death,” coupled with the conversion of the hearts into “a different spirit” points to Elijah’s return, which would precipitate repentance. Interestingly Pitre associates the cessation of the “springs of the fountains” for “three hours” with the three (or three and a half) years of Elijah’s drought (1 Kgs 18:1; Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17), though Michael Stone states that “there is no ready explanation for the period of ‘three hours.’”<sup>76</sup> In pointing to this text, along with Malachi’s prophecy, Pitre asserts that Elijah will come “during a period of interfamilial and interpersonal strife in order to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury. In other words, he will come during eschatological tribulation.”<sup>77</sup>

As seen in this review of early Jewish literature, the traditions concerning the historical Elijah are often blended with elements of Elijah’s return. Even Sirach—a writing known for its lack of eschatological fervor—tells the story of Elijah’s life, closely associating Israel’s apostasy in the prophet’s lifetime with her exile, and the restoration of Israel with Elijah’s return. Sirach also introduces Elijah’s historical ministry in terms reminiscent of Malachi’s day of the Lord. He conflates the prophecy of Elijah’s reconciliation of the generations with Isaiah’s account of the Servant’s mission to restore the tribes of Israel, and associates the prophet who raised the widow’s son with future resurrection. The association of Isaiah’s Servant (61:1) with Malachi’s prophecy of Elijah’s return is made in 4Q521, though the exact relationship between the two is not certain. It is also possible that

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<sup>76</sup> Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 183. Contra Stone, 4 *Ezra*, 171.

<sup>77</sup> Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 183.

the submission of “heaven and earth” to the “anointed one” could be a veiled reference to Elijah’s control over rain. *L.A.B.* equates Phinehas with Elijah, using episodes from Elijah’s life, as well as the eschatological expectation of his return, to communicate the identification of the zealous priest with the fiery prophet. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* equates Elijah with Phinehas the high priest as well, conferring upon both the “covenant of life and peace” of Malachi 2:4–7. The Targum also associates the prophet’s return with the return of the Diaspora. Interestingly, the reign of John Hyrcanus I was associated by some with the restoration of Israel. Thus Hyrcanus’ reign was identified with the eschatological Elijah, and his enemies were identified with the wicked king Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Finally, both *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* appropriate imagery from either Elijah’s life or the promise of his return, or a combination of both in apocalyptic contexts. In this survey of Elijah’s drought in early Jewish literature it has been shown that the historical and eschatological Elijah traditions often reflected awareness of both traditions and developed beyond the canonical picture, so that the eschatological and historical Elijah traditions were inseparable. This being the case, it is wise to investigate the implications of the eschatological Elijah in contexts where only images of the historical Elijah are readily apparent.

## Elijah and Restoration in James

As seen in the examination of Elijah's drought in early Jewish literature, the eschatological elements of the Elijah tradition are closely associated with the historical description of the prophet's ministry. A pattern also emerges in these texts that shows Elijah's association with Israel's exile and restoration. Sirach introduces his account of Elijah (48:1–11) using imagery from Malachi, but the sage also closely associates both Israel's *exile* with Elijah's pre-ascension ministry and Israel's *restoration* with Elijah's return. In 4Q521 a possible allusion to the restoration of the tribes of Israel may also exist (2 iii 6), and may be associated with an eschatological prophet-like-Elijah. The prophet's association with exile and restoration is also seen in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, as Elijah the high priest is destined to be sent to the exiles and to effect their return. "Exile" is a potentially important theme for the Epistle of James, as it was sent to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" (1:1). Given Elijah's close association with Israel's return from exile, it is beneficial to examine James' use of exile theology in his letter as it relates to his use of Elijah as an example of righteous prayer.

### *Elijah, James and the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion*

A general consensus has emerged that James' prescript evokes an eschatological understanding of the letter's recipients.<sup>1</sup> James addresses his letter ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ (1:1). Some scholars have interpreted James' prescript as either a literal

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<sup>1</sup> Mußner, *Jakobusbrief*, 62; Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, 77–78; idem, *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 51–52; Jackson-McCabe, "A Letter to the Twelve Tribes," 510–15; Penner, *Epistle of James and Eschatology*, 181–83; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 169; Hutchinson Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor*, 96–101, 134; Scot McKnight, "A Parting of the Way: Jesus and James on Israel and Purity," in *James the Just & Christian Origins* (eds. Bruce Chilton & Craig A. Evans; NovTSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 111–113.

reference to Jews (or Jewish Christians) geographically estranged from Israel, or as a symbolic reference to Christians estranged from their heavenly home (cf. 1 Pet 1:1).<sup>2</sup> Others have combined these two views and have taken the “twelve tribes” to refer to the church residing geographically outside of Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Ralph P. Martin goes as far as saying that the “true Israel” consists of “Jews who express faith in the Messiah,” and thus James’ prescript could refer to the church viewed in continuity with Israel.<sup>4</sup>

The designation “twelve tribes” refers to Israel at its height as a nation—as a unified twelve-tribe kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Israel’s continued sin resulted in exile (Lev 26:17; Deut 4:25–28). The northern tribes were deported by the Assyrians (722 BC). The remaining tribes were exiled by the Babylonians (587/6 BC), and the people of Israel were dispersed throughout the nations (Deut 4:27; 28:64). Even so, there was still hope for the scattered nation. Long before her exile, God promised:

When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the Lord your God has scattered you. Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back. (Deut 30:1–4; cf. Lev 26:40–46).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the literal interpretation, see Mayor, *James*, cxxxiv–cxliii, 29–30; Davids, *James*, 64; on the spiritual interpretation see Dibelius, *James*, 66–67; Ropes, *James*, 118–127; K. L. Schmidt, “διασπορά,” *TDNT* 2:98–104.

<sup>3</sup> Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude* (AB 37; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 4–5.

<sup>4</sup> Martin, *James*, 9; Edwards, “Reviving Faith,” 7.

<sup>5</sup> Exod 24:4; 28:21; 36:21; Num 26:52–56; Josh 4:5; 2 Sam 5:1–3; Sir 44:23; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30. See Christian Maurer, “φυλή,” *TDNT* 9:245–251.

<sup>6</sup> Note the above discussion of *Tg. Ps.-J. Deut* 30:4, where it states that the Lord will gather Israel “*through the mediation of Elijah, the great priest*” (ArBib).

Israel's repentance would be the criterion for her return. The prophets recapitulated God's covenant promise, and they heightened it to include a radical change in Israel's relationship with God:

Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. When they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezek 11:17–20; cf. Jer 32:39).

Ezekiel prophesied that Israel and Judah would one day reunite, never to be divided again (37:15–18). Israel's land would one day be distributed among the restored twelve tribes (Ezek 47:13–48:34). Unfortunately the reality of Israel's return did not immediately live up to the expectations of the prophets. Even after many returned from exile, the nation was no longer organized by tribe (Ezra 2; Neh 7), and Israel remained a slave to foreign power (Ezra 9:7–9; Neh 9:36–37). For the author of Baruch, Israel had turned towards God, but the curse of exile continued.

... you have put the fear of you in our hearts so that we would call upon your name; and we will praise you in our exile, for we have put away from our hearts all the iniquity of our ancestors who sinned against you. See, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and punished for all the iniquities of our ancestors, who forsook the Lord our God. (Bar 3:7–8)

N. T. Wright highlights several texts like that of Baruch, demonstrating that this sense of continued exile played a large role in the eschatology of early Judaism.<sup>7</sup> He states that the Jews of first century Palestine

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<sup>7</sup> N. T. Wright, *NTPG*, 268–272; *idem.*, *JVG* 126–127, 203–204. In support of N. T. Wright's view, see also Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God* (ed. Carey C. Newman; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 77–100; *idem.*, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill), 299–328; Donald J. Versiput, "The Davidic Messiah and Matthew's Jewish Christianity," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP

... believed that, in all the senses which mattered, Israel's exile was still in progress. Although she had come back from Babylon, the glorious message of the prophets remained unfulfilled. Israel still remained in thrall to foreigners; worse, Israel's god had not returned to Zion.<sup>8</sup>

The gathering of God's "scattered people" (2 Macc 1:27; 2:18; Philo, *Praem.* 164–165) "from east and west" (Bar 4:37; 5:5) was a central aspect of Israel's hope for restoration, and this restoration would involve the reconstitution of the twelve tribes.<sup>9</sup> The Qumran community shared this vision of restoration. *1QWar Scroll* (1QM) contains instructions for the great eschatological battle that will mark the end of Israel's oppression. In this battle, "the exiled sons of light return from the desert of the nations to camp in the desert of Jerusalem" (1QM i, 3). They are organized by tribe and led by the "Prince of the whole congregation" who writes upon his shield "the name of Israel and Levi and Aaron and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, according to their births, and the names of the twelve commanders of their tribes" (1QM v, 1–2).<sup>10</sup>

Early Christians also viewed themselves as the eschatological twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>11</sup> This is evidenced particularly in Revelation and particularly in the Gospels, where Jesus appointed *twelve* disciples, to whom he stated:

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34; ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr.; Georgia: Scholars, 1995), 106–116. Wright's view of Israel's continued exile has not gone unchallenged. Note Maurice Casey, "Where Wright is Wrong: A Critical Review of N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*," *JSNT* 69 (1998): 95–103; Clive Marsh, "Theological History? N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*," *JSNT* 69 (1998): 77–94.

<sup>8</sup> Wright, *NTPG*, 268–269. See Josephus, *Ant.* 11.133; 2 Bar. 77:19–78:1 and 4 Ezra 13:40–45 as places where the twelve tribes were seen as scattered "beyond the Euphrates." Wright explains his intentional use of "god", rather than "God" in Wright, *NTPG*, xiv–xv.

<sup>9</sup> See Jer 31:8; 1QS viii, 1; 2 Bar. 78:5–7. The concept is present in rabbinic literature as well. The tenth benediction of the *Amidah* states, "Blow on the great *shophar* for our freedom, and lift up a banner for the gathering of our redeemed [exiles]. Blessed are you Lord who gathers the expelled of the people of Israel" (*TRENT* 1.99).

<sup>10</sup> See also 11QTemple xviii, 14–16, where the leaders of the twelve tribes present grain offerings to God. In the same document, twelve thousand warriors will assemble—"a thousand from each tribe" (lvii, 6–7).

<sup>11</sup> For a brief overview, see Shlomo Pines, "Notes on the Twelve Tribes in Qumran, Early Christianity and Jewish Tradition," in *Messiah and Christos* (ed. I. Gruenwald; TSAJ 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 151–154.

You are those who have stood by me in my trials (οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου); and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28–30 || Matt 19:28).<sup>12</sup>

Here, not only does Jesus allude to the renewal of the twelve tribes of Israel; he also refers to the Twelve as “those who have stood by me in my trials.”<sup>13</sup> In the Apocalypse, the number twelve designates the people of God (Rev 7:4–8; 12:1; 14:1; 21:12, 14). Bauckham notes that this number is “squared for completeness” and “multiplied by a thousand to suggest vast numbers (7:4–8; 14:1; 21:17).”<sup>14</sup> The 144,000 (Rev 14:4) are identified with saints who endure, “those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus” (14:12). E. P. Sanders states that “the expectation of the reassembly of Israel was so widespread, and the memory of the twelve tribes remained so acute, that ‘twelve’ would necessarily mean ‘restoration’.”<sup>15</sup> Given the close association of Israel’s restoration with the reconstitution of “the twelve tribes,” it is very likely that James has this theme of restoration in mind for his readers.

This association of James’ readers with the restoration of Israel has implications for the mention of Elijah in 5:17–18. At first glance, this would seem unlikely as James’ mention of Elijah is separated from the prescript by nearly the entire letter. Still, the structure of James’ letter may point to a connection between these distant verses. The first chapter of James, particularly vv. 2–12, serves as an epitome of the entire letter, with its vocabulary

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<sup>12</sup> See W. Horbury, “The Twelve and the Phylarchs,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 503–527; Richard Bauckham, “The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts,” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 457–459, 469–477; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 98–106.

<sup>13</sup> Luke uses διαμένω, a cognate of μένω, used to describe the Twelve’s endurance ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς. Cf. πειρασμός in Jas 1:2 and ὑπομονή in Jas 1:3, 4 (Edwards, “Reviving the Faith,” 55).

<sup>14</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 36. Bauckham designates the Apocalypse as “a Christian War Scroll,” noting its similarity with 1QM (210–237).

<sup>15</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 98; author’s emphasis.



and themes repeated throughout.<sup>16</sup> The following themes are introduced in chapter 1 and later developed in the body of the letter:<sup>17</sup>

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Introduced</i>	<i>Developed</i>
Enduring testing	1:2–4, 12	5:7–11
The prayer of faith	1:5–8	4:3; 5:13–18
The rich and poor	1:9–11	2:1–7; 4:13–5:6
Wicked desire / God’s generosity	1:13–18	3:13–4:10
The use of the tongue	1:19–20	3:1–12
Faith lived out in deeds	1:22–27	2:14–26

In addition to the recapitulation of various themes throughout the letter, there are specific similarities between 1:2–12 and 5:13–20. These similarities form a “grand *inclusio*” for the entire epistle.<sup>18</sup> The theme of enduring trials and resisting temptation (1:2–4, 12) is recapitulated in ch. 5 in terms of patience and endurance in light of the Lord’s coming (5:7–11). Both 1:5–8 and 5:13–18 address faithful prayer in the midst of suffering, while 1:15–18 and 5:19–20 are the only places in the letter where *πλανάω/πλάνης* and *θάνατος* occur—passages both dealing with wandering/erring believers and death as the potential consequence.<sup>19</sup> Given this “grand *inclusio*” it is possible that James alludes to the theme of exile and restoration found in the prescript by using Elijah—a figure associated with the return of Israel from exile—as a model for his community.

<sup>16</sup> In reaction to Dibelius’ charge that “*the entire document lacks continuity in thought*,” (James, 2) many scholars have followed the lead of Fred O. Francis, who demonstrates that Jas 1:2–27 forms a collection of thematic statements recapitulated in the rest of the letter (“The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and I John,” ZNW 61.1–2 [1970]: 110–126; Davids, James, 25–28; Luke L. Cheung, *Genre, Hermeneutics, and Composition*, 61–67; Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* [NTR; London: Routledge, 1999], 66; Johnson, James, 175–176). Penner limits the *epitome* to 1:2–12 (James and Eschatology, 146–147), while Ralph P. Martin limits it to 1:1–18 (James, cii–ciii).

<sup>17</sup> Johnson, James, 175.

<sup>18</sup> John H. Elliott, “The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication,” BTB 23 (1993): 71 (author’s emphasis).

<sup>19</sup> Mark Edward Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into the Discourse Structure of James* (LNTS 311; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 69–70.

This possibility is made more probable given Sirach's close association of Elijah with Israel's exile and restoration. Several scholars have demonstrated a strong resemblance between the Epistle of James and the Wisdom of Sirach that could point to James' dependency upon the sage.<sup>20</sup> The following represents only a sample of possible parallels:

Do not say, "It was the Lord's doing that I fell away"; for he does not do what he hates. Do not say, "It was he who led me astray"; for he has no need of the sinful. (Sir 15:11–12)	No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. (Jas 1:13)
Be quick to hear, but deliberate in answering. (Sir 5:11)	... let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. . . (Jas 1:19)
Honor and dishonor come from speaking, and the tongue of mortals may be their downfall. (Sir 5:13)	From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. (Jas 3:10)

As discussed above, Sirach *implicitly* associates the fiery prophet with the exile by misplacing Elijah's ministry chronologically after the fall of Samaria (Sir 49:24–48:1), and then lamenting her refusal to repent (48:15). Sirach also *explicitly* associates Elijah with the *restoration* of Israel by conflating Malachi's promise of Elijah's return with Isaiah's description of the Servant's mission. The prophet is destined "to turn the hearts of parents to their children and to restore the tribes of Jacob" (Sir 48:10; cf. Mal 3:22–23; Isa 49:6). Thus, it can be said with confidence that the ministry of Elijah according to Sirach was closely associated with Israel's exile and restoration. Given the possibility that James was

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<sup>20</sup> The greatest concentration of possible allusions to Sirach occur in James' teaching on trial and temptation (Jas 1:2–15; Sir 2:1–18; 15:11–20). On the relationship between Sirach and James, see Anthony Boon, *De Epistolae Jacobi cura libris Siracidae Convenientia* (Groningen: Schierbeek, 1866), esp. pp. 116–118 on Jas 5:17–18; Núria Calduch, "Ben Sira 2 y el Nuevo Testamento," *EstBib* 53 (1995): 313–315; *idem.*, "Amid Trials: Ben Sira 2:1 and James 1:2," in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira And Tobit* (eds. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Kemp; CBQMS 38; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 255–263; Joseph Chaine, *L'épître de saint Jacques* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927), li–lvii; Hubert Frankemölle, "Zum Thema des Jakobusbriefes im Kontext der Rezeption von Sir 2,1–18 und 15,11–20," *BN* 48 (1989): 33–38; Bottini, *La Preghiera*, 51–69.

familiar with the Wisdom of Sirach, James may have associated both Elijah and the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion” with Israel’s exile and restoration.

Sirach’s association of Israel’s restoration with the prayers of the oppressed lends further support for this view. The sage’s passion for restoration is evident in his eschatological prayer for Israel’s deliverance (ET 36:1–22). Here Sirach again makes strong allusion to Isaiah 49:6, asking God to “Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning” (ET 36:13, 16). Immediately preceding this prayer, Sirach teaches on God’s preferential treatment of the poor: “He never shows partiality to the detriment of the poor, he listens to the plea of the injured party” (35:13 NJB). God will not ignore the prayers of orphans and widows (vv. 14–15), nor will the prayers of the humble (ταπεινοῦ) fail to pierce the clouds (v. 21). Sirach concludes this teaching with the aphorism: “His mercy is as welcome in the time of distress as clouds of rain in the time of drought” (ὥραϊον ἔλεος ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως αὐτοῦ ὡς νεφέλαι ὑετοῦ ἐν καιρῷ ἀβροχίας; v. 24).

James cites Elijah’s prayer for drought *and* rain as an example of effective prayer. His letter emphasizes God’s choice of the poor to be heirs of the kingdom (2:5), and states that the cries of those exploited by the rich pierce heaven to reach the ears of the Lord of hosts (5:4). The affinity between James and Sirach on these points is worth noting. There are differences between James’ and Sirach’s accounts of Elijah’s ministry. For instance, James states that Elijah’s drought occurred as a result of prayer, and that prayer effected the return of the rain (5:17–18), while Sirach states that “By the word of the Lord he shut

up the heavens” (48:3).<sup>21</sup> Another difference however, may reflect James’ *interaction* with Sirach. The “Praise of Elijah” declares “How glorious you were, Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! Whose glory is equal (ὅμοιός) to yours?” (48:4). Perhaps James’ declaration that “Elijah was a human being just like us” (ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν; 5:17) was meant to counter Sirach’s glowing description of the prophet in order to make Elijah an accessible exemplar for his readers. It is plausible that James was aware of Elijah’s association with the restoration of the tribes of Israel as recorded in Sirach.

The fact that James’ twelve tribes still exist in the Dispersion is dissonant with the restoration mentioned above. Matt Jackson-McCabe observes that “the diaspora is precisely where the twelve-tribe people ought *not* to be.”<sup>22</sup> It seems odd that James would juxtapose an image of renewal (the twelve tribes) with an image of exile (the Dispersion). Given the association of Elijah with Israel’s restoration, the status of the tribes ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ is also significant for James’ use of the prophet in a context of prayer for those who are suffering.

As mentioned above, James’ address to the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion” has been interpreted both literally and metaphorically, referring both to expatriate Jews and earthbound Christians—or some combination of both. Edwards holds that “Dispersion” (1:1) is analogous to the spiritual distance of the wandering brother (5:19–20). He states, “The recipients may be geographically distant from Jerusalem, but more importantly, they are experiencing a spiritual distance from God.”<sup>23</sup> Likewise, he takes the sickness and

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<sup>21</sup> Note, however, Keith Warrington’s view that prophecy (i.e., the word of the Lord) is “equivalent in value” to prayer in the story of Elijah’s drought. “Significance,” 225.

<sup>22</sup> Jackson-McCabe, “Messiah,” 714 (author’s emphasis).

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, “Reviving the Faith,” 62.

weakness mentioned in James' teaching on prayer (5:13–16) and Elijah's drought as analogous to spiritual distance and exile.<sup>24</sup> This metaphorical reading of Dispersion, sickness, and drought is unnecessary. The status of the tribes in the "Dispersion" is not indicative of a metaphorical spiritual distance from God. Rather, it is indicative of the restoration only *inaugurated* by Jesus in the Gospels. Matt Jackson-McCabe states that James' prescript is "a highly evocative address that, from a deuteronomistic perspective, both connotes a present state in which the promises of God remain unfulfilled and, especially in connection with *χριστός*, sounds a note of eschatological hope."<sup>25</sup> While Jesus proclaimed the end of the exile and the forgiveness of sins – ushering in the Kingdom of God – the consummation of the kingdom is yet to come. The restored twelve tribes are still dispersed.

James' epistle is marked throughout with this inaugurated eschatology. The community is the first fruits of a (new?) creation (1:18). They wait for the coming of the Lord as the farmer waits for the early and later rains (5:7–8). As they experience the oppression of the world, they are encouraged to strengthen their hearts and avoid grumbling against each other, for "the coming of the Lord is near" (5:8) and "the Judge is standing at the doors!" (5:9). James' community is the eschatologically re-formed twelve-tribe kingdom, but it still exists in a world at enmity with God (4:4), where widows and orphans experience tribulation (1:27), the poor are dragged to court (2:6), and the righteous are exploited and even murdered (5:4, 6). Indeed, this community is still subject to the suffering and sickness of a fallen world (5:13–16), yet healing and forgiveness –

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<sup>24</sup> Edwards, "Reviving the Faith," 85–92.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "A Letter to the Twelve Tribes," 510.

evidences of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God in Jesus' ministry – are available to the community.

### ***James, Healing and the Inauguration of the Kingdom***

Edwards is right to apply the exile theology of Jesus as described by N. T. Wright to the Epistle of James, but he is wrong to insist that James' teaching on the prayer in the midst of sickness and suffering necessarily represent restoration from *spiritual* weakness or distance from God rather than physical weakness or sickness. N. T. Wright points out that Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness is coupled with and inseparable from his ministry of healing. Jesus' "works of power were a vital ingredient in the inauguration of the kingdom."<sup>26</sup> Jesus' healing of the paralytic man (Matt 9:2–8 || Mark 2:1–12 || Luke 5:17–26) demonstrates the inseparability of Jesus' ministry of forgiveness and his ministry of healing. There, Jesus responds to the faith of the paralytic's friends by first forgiving sins (Mark 12:6). This arouses the ire of Jewish leaders, who question Jesus' authority to forgive sins. Jesus responds, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?" (v. 9). Jesus does not emphasize forgiveness at the expense of healing. Rather Jesus heals the man to demonstrate that "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (v. 10). Both the healing and forgiveness serve as markers of the kingdom of God. Wright states that in forgiving the man's sins and healing his disease, "the coming kingdom of YHWH has reached out to embrace him" so that "the man can experience his own personal 'return from exile', in the form of healing from his paralysis."<sup>27</sup> The literal physical healing of the paralytic man was analogous to the end of

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<sup>26</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 193.

<sup>27</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 272–273.

exile. It is certainly possible that the renewal of the twelve tribes in James' prescript – the end of exile – is analogous to the literal healing of the community in ch. 5.

While Edwards applies Wright's exile theology to James he ignores Wright's association of Jesus' ministry of healing with the restoration of Israel. Wright asserts that the miracles Jesus performed were inseparable from his proclamation of the kingdom.

They were signs which were intended as, and would have been perceived as, the physical inauguration of the kingdom of Israel's god, the putting into action of the welcome and the warning which were the central message of the kingdom and its redefinition. They were an integral part of the entire ministry, part of the same seamless robe as the parables, and on a level with Jesus' other characteristic actions.<sup>28</sup>

According to Wright, Jesus' miracles served to reconstitute the people of God, to renew creation, and to demonstrate the inbreaking of the kingdom of God.

For James, the ministry of prayer, confession and healing is evidence of *the reconstitution of the people of God*. Physical disabilities would exclude individuals from worship at the temple as “a full Israelite.” Jesus effected the reconstitution of the people of God, in part, by healing the very conditions that would lead to their exclusion. For instance, *1QRule of the Congregation* (1QSa) prescribes:

No man, defiled by any of the impurities 4 of a man, shall enter the assembly of these; and no-one who is defiled by these should be 5 established in his office amongst the congregation: everyone who is defiled in his flesh, paralyzed in his feet or 6 in his hands, lame, blind, deaf, dumb or defiled in his flesh with a blemish 7 visible to the eyes, or the tottering old man who cannot keep upright in the midst of the assembly; 8 these shall not en[ter] to take their place [a]mong the congregation of the men of renown, for the angels 9 of holiness are among their [congre]gation. (1QSa ii, 3–9; cf. Deut 23:1–6)

The catalog of healings performed by Jesus almost perfectly matches this catalog of the excluded. In summarizing his ministry to the disciples of John the Baptist, Jesus states:

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<sup>28</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 196.

Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me. (Luke 7:22–23; cf. Luke 4:18–19; Isa 61:1–2; 58:6)

Jesus reverses the “personal exile” of those excluded from participation in the community through both his declaration of forgiveness and his ministry of healing. Martin C. Albl suggests that the sick person’s call upon the elders of the church (5:14) alludes to the restoration of the sick to the community. “Both the gathering of the elders (as representatives of the community) and the mutual prayer and forgiveness of sin among all community members (5:16) serve to restore the unity of the corporate body.”<sup>29</sup>

James also envisions *the renewal of creation* in his teaching on prayer and healing. Jesus’ works of power also began the renewal of creation. Wright observes that Israel viewed itself as the “linchpin of what the creator god was doing, and would do, for the world as a whole; when Israel was restored, the whole creation would be restored.”<sup>30</sup> The association of healing with the renewal of creation is present in *11QSefer ha-Milḥamah* (11QSM = 4Q285). Here, the renewal of creation, shown in the fructification of the land by the “early and late rains in their season” (1 ii 9–10) is set alongside the promise that “there will be no miscarriage nor will one be sick” (1 ii 11–12). James juxtaposes Elijah’s prayer for drought and rain with the congregation’s prayer for healing. In 11QSM both are a part of the eschatological renewal of the land. Earlier in his letter, James refers to the community as ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων, “a kind of first fruits of his [God’s] creation” (1:18). That this congregation would be the locus of physical healing is fully consistent with Jesus’ inauguration of the new creation.

<sup>29</sup> Albl, “Are Any among You Sick?” 131.

<sup>30</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 193; *idem*. *NTPG*, 259–268.



The ministry of healing in James also demonstrates *the inbreaking of the kingdom of God*—challenging sin and sickness. Wright asserts that Jesus’ ministry of exorcism demonstrated the inbreaking of the kingdom of God into a world oppressed by Satan and his demons. Jesus “seems to have seen himself as fighting a battle with the real enemy, and to have regarded the exorcisms – or healings of those whose condition was attributed to the work of the satan – as a sign that he was winning the battle, though it had not yet reached its height.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Jesus states, “If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20 || Matt 12:28). James does not speak of exorcism in his letter, but he does call his readers to hold no allegiance to a world at enmity with God (4:4). He contrasts “wisdom from above” (3:17) with a false wisdom that is “earthly, unspiritual” and even “devilish” (3:15).

The disciples’ commission to heal and deliver those who were oppressed by the enemy contains the only New Testament parallel to the anointing of the sick in James (5:14). Commissioned by Jesus, they “went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them” (Mark 6:12–13).<sup>32</sup> Given the association of anointing oil with exorcism in this passage, Dibelius concludes that the anointing in James 5:14 represents an exorcism.<sup>33</sup> This conclusion is unnecessary. Edwards notes that the connection between oil, healing, and exorcism is not explicitly given in Mark 6:13.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the symbolic value of anointing is what connects

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<sup>31</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 195.

<sup>32</sup> The mission of the twelve, as given in Mark, immediately precedes incorrect speculations of Jesus’ identity. Some said that he was John the Baptist resurrected, while others saw him as Elijah or one of the prophets (Mark 6:14–15). It is interesting that the mistaken identity of Jesus with either Elijah or John the Baptist immediately follows Mark’s description of the disciples’ ministry of healing and exorcism.

<sup>33</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 252.

<sup>34</sup> Edwards, “Reviving the Faith,” 120.

the disciples' and the elders' practice. Oil was a significant commodity in the ancient world.<sup>35</sup> It was a staple part of Israel's diet early in her existence, and its abundance was dependent upon the proper timing of the rains (Deut 11:14).<sup>36</sup> Oil was used in multiple ways: as food, medicine (Isa 1:6; Luke 10:34), and as a means of ritual consecration (e.g. the anointing of priests and kings).<sup>37</sup> Oil also served as an eschatological symbol. Such is the case in the *Apocalypse of Moses*. Here, Adam is punished by God with "seventy plagues," including afflictions of the eyes and ears (*Apoc. Mos.* 8:2).<sup>38</sup> At Adam's request, Eve and their son, Seth, pray that God send an angel with the "oil of mercy" from the tree in Paradise.

The archangel Michael responds to their prayer:

Seth, man of God, do not labor, praying with this supplication about the tree from which the oil flows, to anoint your father Adam; it shall not come to be yours now but at the end of times (ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν καιρῶν). Then all flesh from Adam up to that day shall be raised (ἀναστήσεται), such as shall be the holy people; then to them shall be given every joy of Paradise and God shall be in their midst, and there shall not be any more sinners before him, for the evil heart shall be removed from them, and they shall be given a heart that understands the good and worships God alone. (*L.A.E.* 13:2–6)<sup>39</sup>

Here, the healing oil is reserved for "the end times." This time of eschatological blessing will be marked by single-hearted worship of God alone (cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 18:31; 36:26) and resurrection. While it is not demonstrable that James is dependent upon the *Apocalypse of*

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<sup>35</sup> Sirach states, "The basic necessities of human life are water and fire and iron and salt and wheat flour and milk and honey, the blood of the grape and oil and clothing" (39:26).

<sup>36</sup> The three staples, grain (גֶּדֶן/סִיטוֹס), wine (שִׁירָוִי/οἶνος) and oil (יֶצֶהר/ἔλαιον) occur together throughout the OT and Apocrypha, indicating their importance to the sustenance of Israel (Num 18:12; Deut 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; 2 Kgs 18:32; 2 Chr 31:5; 32:28 [also LXX 2:9, 14]; Neh 5:11; 10:40; 13:5, 12 [also LXX 10:38]; Jer 31:12; Hos 2:10, 24; Joel 1:10; 2:19; Hag 1:11; Tob [S] 1:7). While Israel was punished with drought according to Elijah's word (1 Kgs 17:1), God miraculously supplied the widow of Zarephath with oil through Elijah's agency (1 Kgs 17:8–16).

<sup>37</sup> Note also 2 *En.* 22:8–10, where Enoch is anointed in order to be made like the angels in an apocalyptic context.

<sup>38</sup> M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," *OTP* 2:273. The Greek version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* is more commonly known as the *Apocalypse of Moses*.

<sup>39</sup> M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," *OTP* 2:275.

Moses, the apocalypse shows that in at least one segment of Judaism oil was associated with healing in an eschatological context. Martin C. Albl notes that James' teaching on healing (5:13–18) closely follows his encouragement that “the coming of the Lord is near” (5:7) and his warning that “the Judge is standing at the doors” (5:9). He also notes that James uses “two eschatologically charged verbs: ‘to save’ (σώζω) and ‘to raise’ (ἐγείρω)” in his description of this healing. Given the epistle’s “eschatological horizon” and the use of σώζω to refer to “ultimate salvation” in other contexts in James (1:21; 2:14; 5:20), Albl asserts that “James sees an integral connection between present bodily healing and eschatological salvation: the two cannot be separated.”<sup>40</sup> The anointing of the sick and demonized by the disciples in Mark 6, and the anointing of the sick by the elders in James 5 both point to the realization of the eschatological age envisioned by the *Apocalypse of Moses*. The disciples were commissioned to advance the kingdom of God through healing and deliverance. James' community follows this same eschatological commission.

James' teaching on healing reflects the eschatological restoration proclaimed and inaugurated by Jesus. Both James and Jesus see this restoration to include the reconstitution of the people of God, the renewal of creation, and the inbreaking of the kingdom of God. Eschatological restoration is inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus and continued in James' community. This restoration is still yet to be completed. The healing and restoration described by James are only “temporary signs of the presence of the kingdom that is yet come in its fulness.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Albl, “Are Any among You Sick?” 138.

<sup>41</sup> Seifrid, “The Waiting Church,” 35.

## **Elijah and Repentance in the New Testament**

The New Testament contains two passages outside of the Epistle of James which make use of imagery from the drought narrative of 1 Kings 17–18. Jesus likens his own ministry to Elijah’s in Luke 4:25–27, while in Revelation 11:3–7, John uses Elijah’s drought as a paradigm of prophetic judgment in his description of the “two witnesses.” In this chapter we will examine both contexts to see if elements from the Elijah cycle of 1 Kings are used in an eschatological context. We will also observe that Elijah’s three and a half year drought was used to illustrate a period of judgment/calamity for the sake of effecting repentance.

### **Elijah’s Drought in Luke 4:16–30**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the ministry of healing prescribed by James for his community is a continuation of the ministry of restoration initiated by Jesus. The Gospel of Luke records the sermon in which Jesus proclaimed to his home town the shape of this restoration (Luke 4:16–30). This inaugural sermon has been the subject of many detailed studies and analyses. It is recognized as bearing programmatic significance for Luke’s two-volume work. The sermon begins with Jesus’ application of Isaiah 61 and 58 to his own ministry. The townspeople respond with wonder at first, but their favor turns to rage after Jesus illustrates the fulfillment of Isaiah’s message from the lives of Elijah and Elisha.

Before delving into Jesus’ use of Elijah and Elisha in this sermon, a brief exploration of the sermon’s opening text is necessary. In vv. 18–19, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:1–2, but he does so while omitting parts of the text and then conflating it with Isaiah 58. These

changes are significant for understanding both the sermon and the synagogue's reaction.<sup>1</sup> First, part of Isaiah 58:6, "to release the oppressed," is inserted into the reading of Isaiah 61.<sup>2</sup> This insertion would have surely raised the hopes of the synagogue that not only heard Jesus announce good news, liberty and recovery of sight, but also salvation from oppression.<sup>3</sup> Next, Jesus ended his citation of Isaiah, stating that the anointed one was sent "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν), but Jesus neglected to finish with the second half of Isaiah's parallelism promising the "day of vengeance" (ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως).<sup>4</sup> The significance of Jesus' use of Scripture comes into focus when it is compared with the use of Scripture in 11QMelchizedek.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to Jesus' sermon, 11QMelchizedek alludes both to the "year of the Lord's favor" (lines 6–9) and to the "day of vengeance of our God" (line 13).<sup>6</sup> This "day of vengeance" is referenced throughout the Qumran corpus (1QS ix 23; x 19; 1QM vii 5; xv 3, 15[?]). James A. Sanders proposes that 11QMelchizedek reveals two hermeneutic axioms guiding the Qumran community's use of Scripture. First, each generation considered itself to be the "True Israel of the End Time." Second, each generation believed that "in the Eschaton God's wrath would be directed

<sup>1</sup> Thorough explanations of the textual difficulties have been made by Darrel L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSS 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 105–111; 316–321; and Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (JSNTSS 94; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 97–119. In addition to the changes addressed in the following discussion, note the omission of ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ and the change of καλέσαι to κηρύξαι. Luke's text also follows where the LXX differs from the MT: omitting יהוה (Isa 61:1) and replacing פקח־קוֹחַ with τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν.

<sup>2</sup> The link based on ἄφεσιν (58:6; 61:2) does not rule out the use of Hebrew word linking, as שָׁלַח occurs in both 61:1 and 58:6; while רָצוֹן appears in 61:2 and 58:5 (Bock, *Proclamation*, 106). The text of Isa 58:6 is changed slightly, as the imperative (ἀπόστειλε) is changed to an infinitive (ἀποστεῖλαι).

<sup>3</sup> Bock, *Proclamation*, 109.

<sup>4</sup> The MT has "the day of vengeance of our God" (וַיּוֹם נָקָם לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ); παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας/ לְנַחֵם כָּל־אֲבֵלִים "to comfort all who mourn" is also omitted.

<sup>5</sup> James A. Sanders, "From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4," 94–95. See also Craig A. Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election," *JBL* 106 (1987): 75–83.

<sup>6</sup> Merrill P. Miller, "The Function of Isa 61:1–2 in 11Q Melchizedek," *JBL* 88 (1969): 467–469.

against an out-group while his mercy would be directed toward an in-group.” When Jesus quoted from Isaiah 61 and 58, he was in essence asserting the *first* axiom of Jewish hermeneutics—declaring the present fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise. When he omitted reference to “the vengeance of our God,” he challenged their view of second axiom. As Jesus stated that a prophet is not δέκτος in his own country and then gave examples of God’s blessing Gentiles, he redrew the expected line between “out-group” and the “in-group.”<sup>7</sup>

Jesus illustrates this unanticipated aspect of prophetic ministry with the lives of Elijah and Elisha. Both prophets spoke words of judgment to those *inside* Israel, while serving as agents of God’s favor to those *outside*. Jesus states that while many widows were in Israel while “the heavens were shut,” Elijah only ministered to the Gentile widow at Zarephath. Though the phrase “the heavens were shut” (ἐκλείσθη ὁ οὐρανός; v. 25b) is not used in the Elijah narrative, Jesus’ wording reflects the covenant curse warned in Deuteronomy, “. . . he will shut up the heavens” (συσχῆν τὸν οὐρανόν; 11:16–17).<sup>8</sup> Jesus’ wording is also consistent with Solomon’s temple dedication prayer (1 Kgs 8:35–36), where Solomon explains that if “heaven is shut” Israel can turn from their sin, seek forgiveness, and God will send rain.

Jesus also states that Elijah’s drought lasted for three and a half years (v. 25). Given the use of this duration in James’ description of Elijah’s drought, as well as in John’s description of the two witnesses, an exploration into its symbolism could be helpful. As mentioned above in the introduction, the Old Testament account does not give this specific

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<sup>7</sup> Sanders, “From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4,” 94–97.

<sup>8</sup> While Luke’s Greek differs from the LXX here, Jesus’ words are still a perfect translation of the Hebrew, ועצר את־השמים (Deut 11:6–7 and 1 Kgs 8:35–36).

time period for the duration of the drought, though it does state that Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal took place "after many days . . . in the third year" (μεθ' ἡμέρας πολλάς . . . ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ τῷ τρίτῳ; 1 Kgs 18:1).<sup>9</sup>

Various explanations have been offered for Jesus' (and James') specificity in the timing of the drought. It could simply reflect in more concrete terms, the addition of "after many days" to "in the third year," or it could refer to the exact interval between the Elijah's pronouncement of drought before the "latter rains" and the "former rains" that finally came three years later.<sup>10</sup> Also, "three and a half" could simply be a round number—half of seven—similar to today's expression, "a half dozen."<sup>11</sup> It should be noted, however, that the time period of three and a half years became an apocalyptic symbol, beginning with Daniel's writings.<sup>12</sup> This period of time was associated with the persecution of God's people (7:25) and the desecration of the temple (9:27; cf. 8:13–14). According to Josephus, the temple was desecrated and out of service for the same amount of time during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (J.W. 1.32; cf. three years in 1 Macc 4:52–54). The symbolic value of this figure has caused some scholars to see an intentional association of Jesus' illustration with an apocalyptic timetable.<sup>13</sup> Others are more reserved, contending that

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<sup>9</sup> In *Liv. Pro.* 21:5 it states that the drought lasted three years, a number easily figured from the biblical narrative. In studying the OT context, one must question whether the "after" in this phrase refers to "after Elijah first pronounced the drought" (1 Kgs 17:1) or "after Elijah came to Zarephath, or left Zarephath" (17:8–24). Jesus' account chooses the former option.

<sup>10</sup> Eric F. F. Bishop, "Three and a Half Years," *ExpT* 61 (1950): 126–127.

<sup>11</sup> J. Jeremias, "Ἡλ(ε)ίας," *TDNT* 2:934, n. 52.

<sup>12</sup> The same time period is represented in various ways throughout Daniel: "a time, times and half a time" (7:25; 12:7); "half a week" (9:27); "1,290 days" (12:11). The situation is similar in Revelation: "forty-two months" (11:2; 13:5); "1,260 days" (11:6; 12:6); "a time, times and half a time" (12:14).

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 109–110; see also Barbara Thiering, who gives the most detailed treatment of this view, though her theory that the number reflects a dispute between the Lukan and Johannine communities is unfounded, as it is based on her equation of the Qumran Community with the early church ("The Three and a Half Years of Elijah," *NovT* 23 [1981]: 41–55).

while Jesus did not intentionally allude to apocalyptic imagery, the period of three and a half years simply entered popular culture as a duration of time associated with misfortune.<sup>14</sup>

In later rabbinic literature the three and a half year time period is associated with misfortune and judgment.<sup>15</sup> In the *Lamentations Rabbah*, the duration of Israel's persecution under Gentile leaders is described as lasting for three and a half years, regardless of whether the actual historical chronology was equivalent.<sup>16</sup> One account, referring to the Bar Kokhba revolt, explicitly associates Hadrian's three-and-a-half year siege of Bethar with judgment:

For three and a half years the Emperor Hadrian surrounded Bethar. In the city was R. Eleazar of Modim who continually wore sackcloth and fasted, and he used to pray daily, 'Lord of the Universe, sit not in judgment to-day!' so that [Hadrian] thought of returning home.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981), 537; Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 421. In later midrashic literature the "many days" of 1 Kgs 18:1, and hence Elijah's drought is associated with times of distress or tribulation, though the duration is given as either eighteen (*Lev. Rab.* 19.5) or fourteen months (*Esth. Rab.* 2.2) rather than three and a half years. The only extra biblical witness of Elijah's drought lasting for three and a half years is found in *S. 'Olam Rab.* 17. A variant listed by Ber Ratner reads "there was a great drought in Samaria for three years and a half (שלוש שנים (ומחצה)," though the main text reads three years alone (*Seder 'Olam Rabba [Die grosse Weltchronich]*, [2 vols.; Vilna: Romm, 1894–1897; repr., ed. S. K. Mirsky; New York: Talmudical Research Institute, 1966], 71, n. ט).

<sup>15</sup> While in some texts the three and a half year duration does not have any particular connotation of judgment (*b. B. Bat.* 96b; 97b; *b. Zebah.* 63a; *b. Menah.* 88a; *Lam. Rab.* 1.12), note the following contexts where there is a connotation of judgment or misfortune: R. Johanan suffers from gallstones for three and a half years (*Song. Rab.* 2.46). Joseph's famine lasted forty-two months (though other durations are given; *Gen. Rab.* 89.9). Saul's reign lasted forty-two months (*Num. Rab.* 3.8). Israel's wilderness sojourn lasted forty-two years (*Exod. Rab.* 25.5). Also, Baalak offered forty-two sacrifices (*b. Naz.* 23b; *b. Sanh.* 105a; *b. Hor.* 10b; *b. Soṭah* 47a). The number forty-two is a number associated with misfortune in several biblical contexts. 42,000 Ephraimites are killed (*Judg* 12:6); forty-two youths are cursed by Elisha and mauled by a bear (2 Kgs 2:23–24); Ahaziah takes the throne when forty-two years old (2 Chron 22:2); and Jehu kills forty-two relatives of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 10:14). For the biblical references to forty-two, see Laura Joffe, "The Answer to the Meaning of Life, the Universe and the Elohistic Psalter," *JSOT* 27 (2002): 223–235; esp. pages 227–228.

<sup>16</sup> The rulers include: Nebuchadnezzar, *Lam. Rab.* §30, 1.40; Vespasian, *Lam. Rab.* 1.31, 40; Hadrian, *Lam. Rab.* 2.4 (see also *j. Ta'an.* 4:5). Most likely that rabbinic tradition associated the cataclysmic time of Antiochus' desecration of the temple with other similar catastrophes in Israel's history.

<sup>17</sup> *Lam. Rab.* 2.4. In *b. Sanh.* 93b states that the reign of Bar Kokhba—judged as a false messiah—lasted for two and a half years. According to I. Epstein, a variant of the tradition found in Dei Rossi's *S. 'Olam Rab.* states that he reigned for three and a half years (*The Babylonian Talmud* [34 vols. London: Soncino, 1935–1948], *Sanhedrin* 2:627, n. 4).



The three and a half year duration was not simply a period of judgment, but also a period of time when Israel's God called for repentance. Rabbi Jonathan remarks:

Three and a half years the Shechinah abode upon the Mount of Olives hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a Bath Kol issued announcing, 'Return, O backsliding children' (Jer 3:14), 'Return unto Me, and I will return unto you' (Mal 3:7). When they did not repent, it said, 'I will go and return to My place' (Hos 5:15). (*Lam. Rab.* 5).

Though late in compilation, the midrashim show that the three and a half year time period was associated with judgment, but this last example from the *Lamentations Rabbah* illustrates that the timeframe could be associated closely with God's judgment given for the sake of effecting repentance. Jesus' specific choice of words, in describing the drought, point precisely in this direction. The motif of the "shut heavens" and the "three and a half year drought" need not point to *apocalyptic* time tables *per se*, but they do point to Jesus' prophetic ministry—declaring God's judgment for the sake of effecting Israel's repentance and restoration. The people of Nazareth are called to respond to judgment (in the form of God's favor withheld) with repentance.

Jesus does not explicitly mention the sickness and death of the widow's son during the drought (1 Kgs 17:17–24), but the boy's sickness could very well be *implied* as the widow's story stands in parallel to Naaman's leprosy. If this is the case, then the story of the widow could also highlight the correct response to judgment (or at least *perceived judgment*). When the boy died (17:17), the mother cried out, "What have you against me, O man of God (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ)? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" (v. 18). The irony of Nazareth's rejection of Jesus is heightened in Capernaum (vv. 31–37), where a demonized man echoes the widow of Zarephath's exclamation. Upon recognizing Jesus as the Holy One of God coming

in judgment the demons squeal, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” (Luke 4:34).<sup>18</sup>

The account of Naaman’s healing is also illustrative of repentance in response to God’s judgment (2 Kgs 5:1–18). Here the commander of an enemy army—one who had even subjugated Israelite captives into slavery (2 Kgs 5:2) is the recipient of God’s favor. This favor is seen both in the battlefield *against* Israel (v. 1) and later as he is healed of leprosy. In contrast, Elisha’s servant Gehazi—one who would have been considered part of the Elisha’s πατρίς, exploited God’s favor upon Naaman, and was consequently struck with leprosy. In both the story of Elijah’s drought and Naaman’s leprosy, God’s favor was shown to the outsider, while judgment was shown to the insider.

Eschatological expectations of Elijah may have played a role in Jesus’ choice of sermon illustrations. As discussed in the above review of Elijah’s drought in early Jewish literature, Elijah was closely associated with the restoration of the exiled Israel (Sir 48:10). He was also identified with Phinehas, the zealous priest. Martin Hengel notes that the Phinehas/Elijah connection served as a rallying call for various factions of Judaism that were concerned with overthrowing the Roman occupation and establishing a pure, holy Israel.<sup>19</sup> While it is not the assertion of this author that Jesus was directly challenging zealots in his sermon at Nazareth, it is helpful to place Jesus’ proclamation of Isaiah 61 and his use of Elijah as an illustration in the context of the nationalistic prophetic movements of the time. As mentioned above, Josephus avoids associating Elijah with “zeal.” This is

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<sup>18</sup> Note the similarity in the exclamation: τί ὑμῖν καὶ σοί, . . . ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (Luke 4:34) and τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Kgs 17:18), noted by Robert Arnold Hausman in “The Function of Elijah as a Model in Luke-Acts (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1975), 51.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Hengel, *The Zealots*, 174–177.

understandable given the prophetic figures that Josephus describes as leading sizable groups of people through the wilderness to perform symbolic acts of deliverance (*Ant.* 20:167–168; *J.W.* 2.259). These “prophets” perceived themselves to be agents of God and understood these actions as eschatological reenactments of events in Israel’s history.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the place of these prophetic leaders in Israel’s society, N. T. Wright explains that for them, “Retelling, or re-enacting, the story of the exodus, . . . was a classic and obvious way of pre-telling, or pre-enacting, the great liberation, the great ‘return from exile’.”<sup>21</sup> Jesus rejected the drama enacted by these messianic pretenders. Instead, as Jesus was *re-telling* the story of the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, he was *pre-telling* the people of Nazareth what the restoration of Israel would look like. As he healed the blind and the lame, cleansed lepers, restored hearing to the deaf, resurrected the dead and preached good news to the poor—everywhere but ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ, he was enacting God’s prerogative to restore Israel through judgment. His actions did not prefigure his rejection of the Jews for the sake of the Gentiles, but instead demonstrated a zealous love that calls his people to repentance.

### ***Elijah’s Drought in Revelation 11***

Elijah’s role as a paradigmatic prophet looms large in John’s depiction of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3–4. This is a thorny text, with symbolism that has been the subject of intense debate. Some have taken the vision to represent two individuals with a mission at the end of time to confront the Antichrist and his kingdom.<sup>22</sup> Others have taken

<sup>20</sup> Richard A. Horsley, “‘Like One of the Prophets of Old’: Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus,” *CBQ* 47 (1985): 435–463; N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 154; citing Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (JSNTSS 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), n. p.

<sup>21</sup> N. T. Wright, *JVG*, 155.

<sup>22</sup> See early traditions such as the *Apocalypse of Elijah*. For a full list of possible interpretations, see Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 572, n. 293.

the vision to symbolically refer to individuals in history, such as Peter and Paul.<sup>23</sup> One thing that has not been debated is that Elijah's ministry plays a large part in John's depiction of the witnesses. Space does not permit an exhaustive description of all interpretations of the two witnesses. Instead, this section of the thesis will concentrate on how imagery from the Elijah cycle is used in John's vision of the two witnesses.

Before investigating the association of Elijah with the two witnesses, it must be observed that "typologically the two witnesses are identical twins."<sup>24</sup> John does not describe two individuals with two different sets of characteristics. Rather he describes both witnesses with the same collective imagery. The two witnesses as a pair are described in terms reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets, particularly in terms of Elijah and Moses. Neither witness is identified with a single individual.

Chapter 11 begins with John's measuring of the temple and those who worship therein (v. 1). He is not permitted to measure the outside court of the temple, as it is given over to foreign occupation for a period of forty two months (v. 2). John then distills the image of the temple (vv. 1-2) into two individuals—witnesses authorized to prophesy for a period of 1,260 days. That these two witnesses (τοῖς δυοῖν μάρτυσιν) are closely linked to the temple is seen in the repetition of δίδωμι as well as the time periods associated with them. As the outer court of the temple has been given (ἐδόθη) to the nations for forty-two months, the two witnesses have been "given power" or "authorized" to prophesy for 1,260 days.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 82–105.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Homer Giblin, *The Book of Revelation: The Open Book of Prophecy* (GNS 34; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 442. See also Paul S. Minear, *I Saw a New Earth: An Introduction to the Visions of the Apocalypse* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968), 99.

<sup>25</sup> Aune remarks that δίδωμι followed by the dative reflects the Hebrew construction -לִּנְתֵּן meaning "to permit" (*Revelation 6-16* [WBC 52B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 278). See also Joseph S. Considine, "The

Both numbers forty-two and 1,260 indicate the same amount of time. Forty-two months (of thirty days each) have a total of 1,260 days, which is equal to three and a half years. In the Apocalypse, the number is derived from Daniel's "time, times and half a time," when the saints are persecuted and the temple desecrated (7:25; 12:7, 11–12). Daniel 12 is of particular importance for understanding John's appropriation of this number. Earlier, in Revelation 10, John sees an angel that bears a striking resemblance with the angelic being of Daniel 12. In Revelation, the angel declares, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished" (10:6–7). In Daniel 12, the angel answers the question "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" (v. 6) by swearing, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed" (v. 7).<sup>26</sup> The time, time and half a time of Daniel is modified by John's angelic messenger, who states that there will be *no more delay*. Thus the "astonishing things" of Daniel 12 are given a sense of immediacy in John's prophecy.<sup>27</sup>

In Revelation 11, these "wonders" include both the physical persecution of God's people as well as their spiritual protection and vindication at the end of the three and a half year period. John measures the temple sanctuary and altar, and counts those worshipping, symbolizing the protection of the saints. The outer court, however, is given

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Two Witnesses: Apoc. 11:3–13," *CBQ* 8 (1946): 377–392, 385; R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (2 vols.; ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 1:280; *HALOT* s.v. נִתַּן.

<sup>26</sup> Note a similar interchange occurs in Daniel 8:13–14, where Bauckham believes that John finds his ground for the temple being trampled for the three and a half year period. Here, one holy one asks another how long the desecration of the temple will last, and the response is "2,300 evenings and morning" = 1,150 days, an approximation of the time, times and half times. See Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 267.

<sup>27</sup> Note also the contrast between Dan 12:4 and Rev 22:10. Daniel is instructed to "seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end," but John is told, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book because the time is near."

to the Gentiles, who will trample the Holy City for forty-two months, symbolizing the physical vulnerability of the saints.<sup>28</sup> That John patterns the ministry of both of the witnesses after Moses and Elijah (see vv. 5–6) is reinforced by his use of this time period as well. Elijah’s drought is said to have lasted for three and a half years (Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17), while the forty-two months of 11:2 may reflect Israel’s, and hence *Moses’* forty-two years/forty-two encampments in the desert.

The prophetic patterning of the witnesses’ ministry is seen in both their dress (sackcloth) and their posture (standing before the Lord). They are “clothed in sackcloth” (περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους; v. 3), a dark, course material made from goat or camel hair.<sup>29</sup> Wearing sackcloth served as a general symbol of mourning (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31) or even penitence (1 Kgs 20:31–32; Dan 9:3; Jonah 3:5–8). It is also the garb of prophets, particularly Elijah (where he is referred to a “hairy man” ἄνῆρ δασύς), Isaiah (Isa 20:2), the prophets of Zechariah’s day (δέρριν τριχίνην; Zech 13:4) and John the Baptist (τρίχας καμήλου; Mark 1:6). John further characterizes the two witnesses as those who “stand before the Lord of the earth” (αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες; v. 4). This reinforces the prophetic identity of the witnesses, given that Elijah precedes his pronouncement of drought, swearing, “As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand. . .” (ὃ παρέστην ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. . . ; 1 Kgs 17:1). Jeremiah also prophesies that even if Moses or Samuel “stood before” (στή . . . πρὸ προσώπου) the LORD, his heart would not turn toward Israel (Jer 15:1).

“Fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies” (v. 5). As mentioned above, Sirach refers to Elijah as “a prophet like fire,” whose “word burned like a torch”

<sup>28</sup> See discussion in George Bradford Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (BNTC/HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 130–131 and Beale, *Revelation*, 556–568.

<sup>29</sup> BDAG, s.v. σάκκος; Stählin, “σάκκος,” *TDNT* 7:56–64; Aune, *Revelation* 6–16, 611.

(48:1). Sirach's characterization of Elijah as the prophet like fire alludes both to Elijah's eschatological ministry as messenger of the covenant (Mal 3:1) and to his ability to call down fire from heaven (1 Kgs 18:20–40; 2 Kgs 1:10–12). Josephus comments that Elijah's ability to bring fire down upon the soldiers sent by Ahaziah (1 Kgs 2:10–12) was the result of Elijah's *prayer* to prove he was a prophet (*Ant.* 9.2 §23).<sup>30</sup> Later tradition incorporated the prophet's ability to produce fire even in childhood, as an angel wrapped the young Elijah in fire and “gave him flames of fire to eat” (*Liv. Pro.* 21:3).<sup>31</sup>

John also uses Elijah's drought as a model for the witnesses, as they “have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying.” Sirach, Pseudo-Philo, Luke and James all reference Elijah's ability to “shut the sky,” enforcing the earlier warnings of the Torah (Deut 11:16–17; Lev 26:19). As will be seen in the next chapter, this covenant curse was appropriated in other Jewish apocalyptic literature as well.

Next, the witnesses are said to “have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want” (v. 6). Clearly the model for this image is found in the plagues of the Exodus account. There, Moses was instructed to strike the Nile with his staff so that it would be “changed into blood” (Exod 7:17). It was by this sign, that Moses (as well as Israel and Egypt) would know that  $\Upsilon\text{HWH}$ , the God of Israel is God alone. The witnesses' authority to judge does not simply stop with water turning to blood, however. Indeed they are said to be able to “strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want” ( $\text{πατάξαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσάκις ἐὰν}$

<sup>30</sup> See also *Liv. Pro.* 21:12, where the fire descends as a result of Elijah's prayer, and *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* 2 Kgs 1:10–12, where the fire proves Elijah's status as a prophet of the LORD.

<sup>31</sup> D. R. A. Hare, “Lives of the Prophets,” *OTP* 2:396.

θελήσωσιν; 11:6). This echoes the cry of the Philistines, afflicted for stealing the ark of the covenant: “Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues (πατάξαντες . . . ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ) in the desert” (1 Sam 4:8). This enhances the identification of the two witness’ authority with that of Moses – God’s authorized agent of Israel’s deliverance. In confronting Pharaoh, Moses not only challenged the political system which kept Israel in bondage, he stood as a faithful witness *against* the idolatry that perpetuated Pharaoh’s rule.

After three and a half *years* of this prophetic judgment, the Beast prevails against the two witnesses and kills them in the sight of the whole earth. *Three and a half days* later the witnesses are resurrected and vindicated, as they ascend to heaven (11:7–12). An earthquake follows (v. 13), that kills 7,000 people—one tenth of the inhabitants of the city that is spiritually “called Sodom and Egypt, where the Lord was crucified” (v. 8). As a result of this earthquake, the survivors of the city “gave glory to the God of heaven” (v. 13). The death of the 7,000 provides another parallel between the witnesses of Revelation and Elijah. The vast majority of Israel was guilty of apostasy—with the exception of only 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kgs 19:14–18). In John’s vision 7,000 inhabitants of the city perish, while the vast majority (nine tenths) “gave glory to the God of heaven” (Rev 11:13). “Not the faithful minority, but the faithless majority are spared, so that they may come to repentance and faith.”<sup>32</sup> The harsh, three and a half *year* judgment of the witnesses ends in their death, but their resurrection, *three and a half days* later marks their vindication and signals the final repentance of the “faithless majority.”

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<sup>32</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 283.



Noting the echoes of the ministries of Moses, Elijah and Jesus—each a paradigmatic prophet—Bauckham asserts that the story of the two witnesses also provides for the church a model of faithful prophetic witness.

It portrays the power of the true prophet's message, his rejection and martyrdom, and his hope of eschatological vindication issuing both judgment, and also, more prominently, in salvation for the world which rejected and triumphed over him (11:13). This is the pattern for the churches, who are called to the prophetic ministry in the last days.<sup>33</sup>

This paradigmatic prophetic ministry includes the symbolic “shutting up of the heavens” (11:6), “revealing that people are being judged because they have violated the covenantal and moral order that God has established on earth.”<sup>34</sup> The prophetic ministry of the church ends, however with final vindication.

### ***Relevance for Elijah's Drought in James***

Jesus likened his own ministry to that of Elijah during the three and a half year drought—a time of rejection and judgment for those who took God's blessing for granted. In both Luke and Revelation the three and a half year drought provided an occasion for Israel—under judgment—to respond with repentance. John evoked the images of two paradigmatic prophets, and set them within an apocalyptic timetable to describe the church's prophetic ministry in the midst of persecution.

James, by evoking the image of Elijah's three and a half year drought may call the church to a similar prophetic ministry. In the shadow of the murderous opposition of the rich (5:1-6), James calls the righteous to patiently (vv. 7-11) and faithfully (v. 12) offer a prophetic witness. In confronting sickness, the community is to purge itself of the sin that

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<sup>33</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 584.

may be its cause (vv. 13-16; 19-20).<sup>35</sup> While the church does not literally control the rain, it does stand with prophetic authority, and its “testimony carries with it judgment in response to unbelief and persecution and blessing in response to belief.”<sup>36</sup> In the midst of judgment, James’ audience is given the hope of restoration, for “the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (5:15).<sup>37</sup> This is where James’ choice of Elijah’s prayer for drought has direct bearing upon both his exhortation concerning prayer (vv. 13-16) and his call to bring back those who wander from the truth (vv. 19-20). As a prophetic witness, the church is given authority to declare that sin results in judgment and to offer blessing, healing and restoration through repentance.

The three and a half year drought in James’ Epistle may have a relationship to the church’s identity as the “twelve tribes” that remain in the Dispersion.<sup>38</sup> Daniel 12 provides a link between the end of the Dispersion and this time period. The chapter opens with both the deliverance and the anguish of God’s people (v. 1) that precedes resurrection: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame (לחרפות) and everlasting contempt (לדראון עולם)” (v. 2). Both the LXX and Theodotion translate לחרפות לדראון עולם with εἰς ὀνειδισμόν and εἰς αἰσχύνην αἰώνιον. The LXX, however, adds διασποράν to its translation (one of only twelve instances in the Greek Old Testament). Here final judgment is likened to exile (v. 2). While Theodotion does

<sup>35</sup> “Kān” plus the subjunctive phrase, “ἀμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκώς,” is a conditional clause that indicates that sin is not necessarily the cause of the sickness.

<sup>36</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 584.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Wall notes that the verbs σώζω and ἐγείρω are “resurrection verbs” that underscore “healing as an experience of God’s resurrection power, given now to the community in anticipation of the restoration of the entire created order at the Lord’s *parousia*” (*Community of the Wise*, 266).

<sup>38</sup> See the earlier discussion of James’ prescript as a description of the inaugurated restoration of Israel that remains in the Dispersion, patiently waiting for the restoration’s completion.

not make use of διασπορά in v. 2, the synonym διασκορπισμὸν, is found in v. 7. As mentioned above in the discussion of Revelation 11, one heavenly being asks another when the wonders of vv. 1–3 will occur (v. 6). The angel replies that there will be “a time, times and half a time” (εἰς καιρὸν καιρῶν καὶ ἥμισυ καιροῦ) until the completion of the Dispersion (ἐν τῷ συντελεσθῆναι διασκορπισμὸν; TH v. 7). Thus Daniel holds that the end of the Dispersion will occur after “a time, times and a half time,” a period equivalent to “three and a half years” (cf. 7:25–27; 8:13–14; 9:25–27).

As mentioned above this time period is associated with the ‘abomination that desolates,’ where Antiochus IV Epiphanes erected an image of Zeus in the Temple (168 BC) and stopped temple sacrifices (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.32). Those who would have read Daniel at that time expected the temple to be delivered and the Dispersion reversed at the end of this period—an expectation that was indeed realized in 164 BC. But, as T. F. Glasson points out, the promised resurrection and eschatological blessing that marked this deliverance in Daniel 12:1–3 never took place. “The Jews (and later the Christians) therefore took the happenings of this period as a *foreshadowing of the last years of world history*.”<sup>39</sup> The duration of time prior to the consummation of the ages would be marked with suffering and tribulation similar to the time of persecution at the hands of Antiochus. Daniel’s three and a half years are marked by both the persecution and purification of the saints. In martyrdom, the wise will be “refined, purified, and cleansed” (לְצָרוֹף בָּהֶם וּלְבָרֵר וּלְלַבֵּן; 11:35).<sup>40</sup> This purification by means of persecution will continue “until the time of the end” (עַד־עֵת קֵץ). Similarly, Daniel is told by the angelic being that the contents of his vision are

<sup>39</sup> T. F. Glasson, *The Revelation of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 68 (author’s emphasis).

<sup>40</sup> John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 386.

to be sealed “until the time of the end” (עַד־עַתָּה קץ; 12:9), and again “Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined” (וַיִּתְּבַרְרוּ וַיִּתְּלַבְּנוּ וַיִּצְרְפוּ; v. 10). Those who endure this time of purification (הַמַּחֲכָה; TH ὑπομένων; LXX ἐμμένων) will be blessed (μακάριος; v. 12).

As mentioned previously, endurance is a central theme in James (1:2–4, 12; 5:7–11). James’ readers are to “count it all joy” in the midst of various trials (πειρασμοῖς . . . ποικίλοις; 1:2), as the testing (δοκίμιον) of their faith produces endurance (ὑπομονήν; v. 3). James calls those who endure “blessed,” in a manner similar to Daniel 12:12:

Blessed (Μακάριος) is anyone who endures temptation (ὑπομένει πειρασμόν). Such a one has stood the test (δόκιμος) and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (Jas 1:12)

The theme of endurance in the midst of trials is recapitulated in chapter 5. There, James instructs his readers to be patient (μακροθυμήσατε) in light of the coming of the Lord (v. 7), whose imminent arrival (v. 8) is likened unto the arrival of the early and later rains (v. 7). Next, James calls his readers to emulate the patience (μακροθυμίας) of the prophets in the midst of suffering (κακοπαθίας; v. 10), and again calls those who endure “blessed” (μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομείναντας; v. 11). Given this emphasis on endurance in the midst of trials, his claim that Elijah’s drought lasted three and a half years (v. 17) could echo Daniel’s period of eschatological trial and purification. Elijah’s drought, in the context of vv. 13–16 is analogous to the suffering (κακοπαθει) of the community.<sup>41</sup> For James, the proper response to this suffering is to call for the prayers of the community and to repent of sin. James makes no claim that all sickness and suffering is the result of an individual’s sin. Still,

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<sup>41</sup> Note the use of θλίψις in 1:27 to describe the plight of widows and orphans. θλίψις is virtually a technical term for eschatological tribulation (Dan 12:1; Matt 24:9, 21, 24; Mark 13:19, 24; 2 Thess 1:4; Rev 1:9; 2:9, 10, 22; 7:14; cf. Herm. Vis. 2.2.7) See Edwards, “Reviving the Faith,” 68, n. 70; Heinrich Schlier, “θλίβω, θλίψις,” *TDNT* 3:139–148. Patrick Hartin (“Who is Wise,” 494) remarks that in using θλίψις, “James reinterprets the everyday sufferings of those most abandoned in society as the signs that the end is rapidly approaching.”

all sickness and suffering provides an occasion for repentance. Prayer and confession in the midst of suffering is the mark of patient endurance that will ultimately result in blessing (whether healing in the present or final resurrection).

The role of the eschatological Elijah in Malachi may also have significance for James' emphasis on present suffering as a means of purification and perfection. Todd Penner calls Malachi 3:1–5 the *locus classicus* of the refinement motif.<sup>42</sup> The coming of the Lord is likened to “a refiner’s fire” (כַּאֵשׁ מַצְרֶה; v. 2), and the descendants of Levi will be refined “like gold and silver” (v. 3). Malachi includes a catalog of “impurities” that resemble the social issues addressed in James:

Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers (Jas 4:4), against those who swear falsely (5:12), against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages (5:4), the widow and the orphan (1:27), against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:5)<sup>43</sup>

The day of purification will come “burning like an oven (בֶּעֶר כְּתִנּוֹר)” and “all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble” (Mal 3:19; ET 4:1). As mentioned above, Sirach associates Elijah’s pre-ascension ministry with the purifying fire of Malachi, stating that his word “burned like an oven” (כְּתִנּוֹר בּוֹעֵר; 48:1). Given the affinities between the purification brought about at the day of the Lord and the social concerns of James, it is interesting that James likens Elijah—Sirach’s prophet like fire—to the community purified by confession, repentance and correction (5:13–20).

<sup>42</sup> *The Epistle of James and Eschatology*, 187.

<sup>43</sup> The Syriac translates וּמַטִּי־גֵר “those who thrust aside the alien” as *wšlyn l’ yn’ dmtpn’ l’wty* “those who turn aside him who turns to me” which could offer a parallel to James 5:19–20.

Elijah's drought in Luke and Revelation was appropriated as a paradigm for prophetic judgment. Jesus used Elijah's drought as an illustration of God's judgment on "the insiders" and his favor poured out upon "the outsiders." John's vision incorporates images from the historical Elijah—that of Elijah's drought, his dress, and his ability to call fire from heaven to illustrate the prophetic ministry of the church. He also reverses the remnant imagery of 1 Kings 19:14–18 to point to the church's success as prophets of repentance. In addition to appropriating Elijah's drought as illustrations of redemptive judgment, both John and Jesus associate this calamity with Daniel's "time, times, and half a time"—a time of eschatological trial and purification. Bo Reicke is correct to say that the

the three and a half years may be interpreted as a period of waiting for the final manifestation of God's grace. . . . Because of its eschatological timetable, the Elijah story could be used to comfort the church who were living in the last days.<sup>44</sup>

The duration of Elijah's drought as given by James plausibly associates this time of eschatological trial with the present suffering of the community and the resultant purification.

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<sup>44</sup> James, Peter, and Jude, 61. See also Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 270.

## Rain and Restoration in James

James' mention of Elijah's drought most clearly points to the narrative of 1 Kings 17–18. Still, it is helpful to view the images of rain and drought through an eschatological lens. Such a lens is appropriate given Elijah's close association with Israel's restoration and the eschatological meaning of the three and a half year time period. In this chapter we will look at the images of rain and drought in both biblical and early Jewish literature after examining James' use of rain imagery in 5:7–8. It will be seen that rain and drought served as covenant blessing and curse, and that they also provided images of restoration and eschatological judgment in early Jewish literature.

James 5:7–8 explicitly draws upon rain imagery to encourage his readers to be patient in the midst of suffering.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! (5:7–9 NRSV).

As the farmer is to wait patiently for the sure coming of the rains, James' audience is admonished to wait patiently for the sure coming of the Lord. As mentioned in the literature review, above, Robert Eisenman asserts that “‘rain-making’ and the theme of ‘coming eschatological Judgment’ are . . . intrinsic to James’ Letter.”<sup>1</sup> In his article on “Eschatological Rain Imagery,” he associates Elijah's control of the rain with the early and later rains of 5:7–8.<sup>2</sup> He points to *1QWar Scroll* (1QM) as a parallel, as it contains similar eschatological rain imagery. 1QM describes the arrival of an army of angels in a great

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Testament Code*, 132.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Eisenman, “Eschatological ‘Rain’ Imagery.”

eschatological battle: “Our horsemen are [like] clouds and fogs of dew that cover the earth, like torrential rain that sheds justice on all its sprouts” (xii 9–10; cf. xix 1–2).<sup>3</sup> Eisenman then connects these rains with the descent of the Son of the Man “coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13) and its parallels in the Gospels (Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26):<sup>4</sup>

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. (Mark 13:26–29)

Here in the Olivet Discourse, the coming of the Son of Man is associated with both meteorological and agricultural imagery. The Son of Man is also said to be “at the gates” (ἐπὶ θύραις). Similar imagery is used in James, as believers are instructed remain patient until the coming of the Lord, as a farmer is patient until the coming of the former and later rains (5:7), and the coming Judge is described as being “at the doors” (πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν; v. 9).<sup>5</sup> Eisenman is right to see eschatological import in James’ use of rain imagery. He is wrong, however, to associate rain with judgment alone, as the post-diluvian arrival of rain is very often associated with the blessing of God’s provision.<sup>6</sup> The farmers’ anticipation of the “former and later rains” (5:7) carries a positive connotation. This is evident from the first pairing of the words πρόϊμος and ὄψιμος in the Old Testament:

If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the LORD your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your

<sup>3</sup> DSSSE 1:132–133.

<sup>4</sup> Eisenman, “Eschatological ‘Rain’ Imagery,” 181.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson (*James*, 315) and Laws (*James*, 210–211) both deny that James speaks of a delay of the *parousia* in these verses. The issue is not delay of the Lord’s coming. The issue is its *imminence*.

<sup>6</sup> After the flood, God promised to not punish the earth by in a similar manner (9:11). There are instances where rain is sent as punishment. Samuel called down rain at the beginning of the harvest season as a witness to God’s displeasure with the people. Rain during this season threatened the harvest (1 Sam 12:17–19). See also Ezek 13:10–11; 38:21–23; Zech 14:16–18; *Sib. Or.* 3:689–690; 4Q370.



soul—then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain (πρόιμον καὶ ὄψιμον/יורה ומלקוש), and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil. (Deut 11:13-14)

The arrival of the “former and later rains” is a blessing contingent upon Israel’s wholehearted commitment to God, but Israel’s split loyalties will shut the heavens:

Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshiping them, for then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit. . . (Deut 11:16-17)

The promise of rain and threat of drought found in Deuteronomy links James 5:7 closely with 5:17-18, as the passage serves as the covenantal justification for Elijah’s drought in 1 Kings (cf. Lev 26:3-4, 18-21; 1 Kgs 8:35-36).<sup>7</sup> The fertility of Israel’s land depended upon her wholehearted loyalty to God and obedience to his commandments. This warning would have been quite familiar to James’ audience as it was recited twice daily in the Shema (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41).<sup>8</sup>

The pairing of πρόιμος and ὄψιμος is also repeated in the prophets. Hosea calls Israel to repent and make herself available to God’s merciful power to heal the wounded and resurrect the dead:

Come, let us return (ἐπιστρέψωμεν) to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal (ιάσεται) us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up (ἀναστήσόμεθα), that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains (ὡς ὑετὸς ἡμῖν πρόιμος καὶ ὄψιμος/יורה כמלקוש לנו כגשם לנו) that water the earth. (6:1-3)

Such a passage fits well the context of James 5. Here the LORD’s return to Israel is described as the ὑετὸς . . . πρόιμος καὶ ὄψιμος, bearing an uncanny resemblance to James’ image of

<sup>7</sup> Note Bottini’s comparison of 1 Kgs 8:35-36 and Jas 5:13-20 mentioned above in the literature review.

<sup>8</sup> The Scripture portions that comprised the *Shema* were set in pre-mishnaic times. See Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale, 2000), 520-523, who cites *m. Tam.* 5:1; *m. Ber.* 2:2; *b. Ber.* 14b.

the early and later rains (5:7). Israel had been “torn” and “struck down” by her God as judgment for her unfaithfulness. Having learned from this chastisement, Israel returns to the LORD, in hope that he will heal (ἰάσεται) them and even raise them up (ἀναστήσόμεθα). James associates sickness with sin, and encourages repentance with the same hope of the sick receiving healing (5:13–16a). This hope follows on the heels of James’ call to patient endurance as the community waits for coming of the Lord, likened to the arrival of the early and later rains (5:7–8).

Πρόϊμος and ὄψιμος are repeated as a pair elsewhere (Joel 2:23; Zech. 10:1; Jer 5:24). Joel’s use is particularly striking. In the face of drought, the prophet encourages the community to repent of their sins, as God is “merciful and compassionate” (Joel 2:13; cf. Jas 5:11). He calls the entire congregation (including the πρεσβυτέρους) to fast and pray (Joel 2:16). As a result, God promises restoration. The desert will blossom (βεβλάστηκεν), and the trees yield fruit (καρπὸν; v. 22; cf. Jas 5:18). God will bring “autumn rains in righteousness,” as well as the early and latter rains (v. 23). In these prophetic passages the arrival of Israel’s God to heal, save and deliver is likened unto the coming of the early and the later rains that bring fertility and life to the land. This fertility and life is threatened by sin, but Israel can turn to a “gracious and compassionate” God, who heals and restores. James’ use of Elijah’s prayer for drought and rain occurs in the context of communal prayers of confession and healing – topics wholly appropriate to the passages evoked by πρόϊμος καὶ ὄψιμος.

Drought is linked specifically to the oppression of the poor in the prophets and in early Judaism. As mentioned above, Elijah’s pronouncement of drought served as a “tactical strike” against the idolatrous leaders of northern Israel. The drought proved YHWH’s supremacy over Baal’s non-existence, and struck at the economic heart of Ahab’s

reign of exploitation (1 Kgs 21). The writing prophets also pronounced drought in response to oppression. In Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard (ch. 5), YHWH applies this covenant curse to Israel using the image of an unproductive vineyard:

I will make it a waste; . . . I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry! Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land! The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing: Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. (Isa 5:6–9)<sup>9</sup>

The song continues, placing drought in parallel with Israel's exile, "Therefore my people go into exile without knowledge; their nobles are dying of hunger, and their multitude is parched with thirst" (v. 13; cf. 24–30).<sup>10</sup>

In Amos, rain is withheld from Israel as a clarion call for her to turn away from the injustices characterized by the "cows of Bashan . . . who oppress the poor, who crush the needy" (4:1, 7–8). Because she would not heed the warning, exile was inevitable (4:2–3). In

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<sup>9</sup> Prior to James' use of rain imagery to describe the coming of the Lord (5:7–8), James indicts the rich who have oppressed the righteous even to the point murder (5:1–6). The rich are warned: "Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts" (5:4). By referring to "the ears of the Lord of Hosts," (ὦτα κυρίου σαβαωθ) James makes a clear allusion to Isaiah 5:9 (LXX). Here YHWH likens Israel to a vineyard and threatens her with drought and exile. That James alludes to this text is strengthened by Isaiah 5:7, where instead of finding justice and righteousness among Judah and Israel, the Lord of hosts found bloodshed (cf. Jas 5:6) and "heard a cry" (הִשְׁמָעָה/κραυγήν; cf. Jas 5:4). James states, however, that the "cry" came from the wages of defrauded (ἀπεστερημένος) laborers. Luke Timothy Johnson suggests that here James may combine the allusion to Isaiah with an allusion to Malachi 3:5, where among the impurities purged from Israel will be those who "defraud the worker of his wage" (τοὺς ἀποστεροῦντας μισθὸν μισθωτοῦ). Johnson holds that Mal 3:5 provides the closest verbal parallel though Deut 24:14 and Lev 19:13 both contain similar concepts ("The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *JBL* 101 [1982]: 393–394). The possible allusion to Malachi 3 is interesting given James' use of Elijah in 5:17–18 and Malachi's promise of Elijah's return. Also the promise of rain is explicitly mentioned in Mal 3:10, where God instructs Israel to "bring the full tithe into the storehouse" so that he will "open the windows of heaven" and "pour down . . . an overflowing blessing." The blessing mentioned is rain, as seen in the next verse where agricultural plenty is promised. Locusts will not destroy crops, and Israel's "vine in the field will not be barren" (v. 11).

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah indicts Israel, and contends that because of her unfaithfulness, "the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come" (3:3).

these contexts, drought is the result of injustices that mirror James' indictment of the rich (5:1–6), making James' choice of rain imagery all the more appropriate.

The theme of rain as God's blessing and drought as judgment is present within Second Temple Judaism, where the Deuteronomic curses morph into eschatological judgment. Rain and drought imagery in the *Epistle of Enoch* (1 En. 92–105) is particularly important, as it bares several resemblances with James. According to George W. E. Nickelsburg, the *Epistle of Enoch* was written “to exhort the righteous to faith and courage and joy in the midst of oppression”—a theme found throughout James.<sup>11</sup> Both the *Epistle of James* and the *Epistle of Enoch* are letters written by a patriarch to his community to give instruction for living.<sup>12</sup> Both use the literary forms of woes, exhortations and descriptions of judgment, and both contrast righteous poor with the wicked.<sup>13</sup> Richard Bauckham describes Enoch's characterization of the sinners and the righteous in a manner consistent with James' characterization of the rich and the poor: “The sinners are powerful, rich, arrogant, unscrupulous, and oppress the poor, such that ‘the paths of wrong-doing’ can also be called ‘the paths of oppression’ (91:19). . . . The righteous, who by comparison with the wicked are few (103:9, 15), are the objects of contempt, persecution and oppression (94:11; 95:7; 96:8).”<sup>14</sup> While it cannot be shown that James is dependent upon 1 *Enoch*, his use

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<sup>11</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Epistle of Enoch and the Qumran Literature,” *JJS* 33 (1982): 333–348; 344; *idem.*, “The Apocalyptic Message of 1 *Enoch* 92–105,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 309–328.

<sup>12</sup> This comparison does not necessitate that James is pseudepigraphal as is the *Epistle*.

<sup>13</sup> Patrick J. Hartin, also notes that while the *Epistle of Enoch* gives detailed revelatory descriptions of judgment, James contains no such thing—though he *does* use the concept of future judgment as motivation for his instruction (“Who Is Wise and Understanding Among You?” 495–497).

<sup>14</sup> Richard Bauckham, “Apocalypses,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1—The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien and M. A. Seifrid, eds.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 135–188; see 146. Francis X. Kelly calls James' condemnation of the rich a “concentrated distillate of the teaching of the Book of Enoch,” and claims that the “righteous one” of James 5:6 is best understood against this backdrop (“Poor and Rich in the Epistle of James” [Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1972], 220, 236).

of drought as an image of judgment takes on an eschatological ring when read against the backdrop of Enoch's *Epistle*. Here the patriarch warns of eschatological judgment awaiting these rich sinners:

Every cloud, mist, dew, and rain shall witness against you; for they shall all be withheld from you, from descending for you; and they shall not give heed, because of your sins. So then offer gifts to the rain, that it be not hindered from descending for you; perhaps the dew may receive from you gold and silver in order to descend for sure. (100:11–12)

If he closes the windows of heaven and hinders the rain and the dew from descending upon the earth because of you, what will you do? . . . Because you utter bold and hard (words) against his righteousness, you shall have no peace. (101:2–3)<sup>15</sup>

The writer follows the model of the Old Testament covenant lawsuit, with the heavens as witnesses against the unrighteous (cf. Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28). In the midst of this judgment, the unrighteous no longer have the means to buy relief.

As mentioned above, Eisenman associates the *War Scroll* closely with James 5:7–8, and holds that the rain imagery in James points to eschatological judgment. He fails to note, however, the eschatological *blessing* of rain as found in 11QSefer ha-Milhamah (11QSM):

7 May God Most High bless you, may he show you his face, and may he open for you  
8 his good treasure which is in the heavens, to cause to fall down on your earth 9  
showers of blessing, dew and rain, early and late rains in their season, and to give  
you fru[it,] 10 the harvests of wheat, of wine and of oil in plenty. And for you the  
land will yield [de]licious fruits. 11 And you shall eat (them) and be replete. *Blank* In  
your land there will be no miscarriage 12 nor will one be sick; drought and blight  
will not be seen in its harvests; 13 [there will be no disease] at all [or stum]bling  
blocks in your congregation, and wild animals will vanish from 14 [the land. There  
will be no pest]ilence in your land. For God is with you and [his holy] angels 15 [are]  
in the midst of your Community. And his holy name is invoked over you. (1 ii 7–15)

11QSM is closely associated with the *War Scroll* and may be a part of its missing ending, or it may be a later composition, intended as a supplement.<sup>16</sup> The document is described by W. J.

<sup>15</sup> E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," *OTP* 1:82. According to Isaac, the *Epistle of Enoch* was written ca. 105–104 BC (*OTP* 1:5–89).

Lyons as an eschatological blessing designed to be spoken over Israel following the conquest of the land. “It thus provides a very clear vision of what some of the Qumran (and possibly, pre Qumran) Jews believed life would hold for them as the eschatological Congregation of Israel.”<sup>17</sup> This new life in the land would be characterized by fertile lands watered thoroughly by the rain (lines 7–11). Interestingly, drought and blight are banished from the land while sickness and disease are removed as well (lines 11–14). Both healing and rain are associated with eschatological restoration. It is understandable that James associates the healing of the sick with Elijah’s prayer for rain.

Rain as eschatological blessing is found in rabbinic literature as well. Hosea 6:2–3 (quoted above) was used to associate the arrival of the rain with the resurrection of the dead. “Just as the resurrection of the dead means life for the world, so the coming of rain means life for the world” (y. *Ta’an.* 1:1).<sup>18</sup> Some rabbinic texts go as far as to state that rainfall is *greater* than resurrection, as only the righteous are resurrected, but the rain falls on the just and the unjust (b. *Ta’an.* 7a).<sup>19</sup> It is also said that “The day on which rain falls is as great as the day of the gathering of exiled [Israel,] as it is said, *Turn our captivity: O Lord, as the streams in the dry land.* By ‘streams’ rain is meant, as it is said, *And the channels of the sea appeared.*”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Martin G. Abegg, Jr., “Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 81–91; Bilhah Nitzan, “Benedictions and Instructions from Qumran for the Eschatological Community,” *RevQ* 61/16 (1993): 77–90.

<sup>17</sup> William John Lyons, “Possessing the Land: The Qumran Sect and the Eschatological Victory,” *DSD* 3 (1996): 151.

<sup>18</sup> See also *Deut. Rab.* 7.6; the same inference is drawn in y. *Ber.* 5:2, where immediately following his mention of Hos. 6:2–3, R. Hiya bar Abba cites 1 Kgs 17:1 and Elijah’s control over rain and resurrection (1 Kgs 17:17–24). See Brigitte (Rivka) Kern-Ulmer, “Consistency and Change in Rabbinic Literature as Reflected in the Terms *Rain* and *Dew*,” *JSJ* 26 (1995): 55–75.

<sup>19</sup> The same concept is found in *Gen. Rab.* 13.6, where it holds that rain falls on humans and animals, but only humans are resurrected.

<sup>20</sup> *B. Ta’an.* 8b, citing Ps 126:4; 2 Sam 22:16; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 8.5; *Lam. Rab.* 1.51.

Rain and drought served as both covenant blessing and covenant curse in the Old Testament. Thus Israel was cursed with a drought as a result of her unfaithfulness in 1 Kings 17–18. That James picks Elijah’s prayer for drought and rain rather than his prayer for the widow’s son is wholly appropriate in the context of chapter 5. Both Elijah and the later prophets condemned the oppression of the poor and ill gotten gain of the rich. James encourages his readers to endure their sufferings at the hands of rich oppressors (vv. 1–6) in light of the imminent coming of the Lord—likened unto the “early and later rains” (vv. 7–8). In verses 13–16, confession, prayer and repentance constitute a proper response to suffering and sickness in James. Drought requires the same response. As seen in the sampling of early Jewish and rabbinic literature, the arrival of the rain provides an image of eschatological restoration. The Lord’s return is likened unto the arrival of the rain (Hosea), and is attended by healing and even resurrection.

## Conclusion

James is fully aware of the eschatological implications of using Elijah as an example of faithful, righteous prayer. Elijah's prayer for drought and rain functions to give the community of faith a prophetic role similar to that of the eschatological Elijah. James' community, as the restored twelve tribes of Israel is called to endure in the midst of eschatological trials and to effect repentance before the arrival of the soon-coming King. In effect, the prayers of the church for healing and restoration are prayer for God's reign.

### *Summary*

Elijah's drought in the Epistle of James has not been the subject of broad scholarly debate. Scholars have appropriately concentrated on the Elijah narrative as background for James 5:17–18. It has been recognized that Elijah's prayer for rain illustrates the centrality of sin, confession and repentance to the larger context of James' teaching on prayer (James 5:13–20). The importance of eschatology in James has been recognized and applied to James' use of rain imagery in 5:7–8 as well as in 5:17–18. The themes of exile and restoration, as evoked by James' prescript, have recently been applied to the letter's teaching on prayer—emphasizing its eschatological significance. In spite of the recognition of eschatology's importance to the letter, little has been done to explore the possibility that James makes use of themes associated with the eschatological Elijah. Still there is evidence that James intends his readers to recognize the eschatological Elijah in his teaching on prayer.

First, it has been shown that in early Jewish literature the eschatological and historical Elijah traditions were inseparable. Elements from Elijah's drought narrative are



often used to enhance a text's description of the eschatological Elijah. The converse is true as well; themes associated with the prophet's return are used to enhance re-tellings of narrative. Sirach introduces Elijah's historical ministry in terms reminiscent of Malachi's day of the Lord and associates Elijah's pre-ascension ministry with Israel's exile. He also broadens Elijah's eschatological task to include the restoration of the twelve tribes (and possibly the resurrection of the dead). In 4Q521 the submission of "heaven and earth" to the eschatological "anointed one" could be a veiled reference to Elijah's control over rain. *L.A.B.* equates Phinehas with Elijah, using episodes from Elijah's life, as well as the eschatological expectation of his return, to communicate the identification of the zealous priest with the firey prophet. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* also equates Elijah with Phinehas and associates the prophet's return with the return of the Diaspora. It also identifies the reign of John Hyrcanus I with the eschatological Elijah and Hyrcanus' enemies with the wicked king Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Finally, both *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* appropriate imagery from either Elijah's life or the promise of his return, or a combination of both. Given the blending of both the historical and eschatological elements of the Elijah traditions in the contexts mentioned above, it seems plausible that James could have both contexts in mind.

Second, it was demonstrated that James' prescript "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion," sets a tone of inaugurated and yet-to-be-consumated eschatology. Elijah is linked to this restoration theology in early Jewish literature (as shown in the previous chapter), and given the eschatological *inclusio* that frames James' letter, James most likely associates Elijah with this restoration. James' teaching on healing was shown to reflect the eschatological restoration proclaimed and inaugurated by Jesus. Both James and Jesus see this restoration to include the reconstitution of the people of God, the renewal of creation,

and the inbreaking of the kingdom of God. Eschatological restoration is inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus and continued in James' community.

Third, the New Testament use of Elijah's drought outside of James was explored. In Luke 4:25–27 Jesus likens his own ministry to Elijah's, while in Revelation 11:3–7, John uses Elijah's drought as a paradigm of prophetic judgment in his description of the "two witnesses." Again, elements from the Elijah's drought in 1 Kings were used in eschatological contexts. It was also observed that Elijah's three and a half year drought was used to illustrate a period of judgment/calamity for the sake of effecting repentance in these contexts. James uses Elijah's drought serves as a prophetic paradigm to community. All suffering (while not necessarily being the result of sin) offers an occasion for the community to repent and turn to God for their restoration.

Fourth and finally, the images of rain and drought were viewed through an eschatological lens. After looking at James' use of rain imagery in 5:7–8, the images of rain and drought in biblical and early Jewish literature were reviewed. It was seen that rain and drought served as covenant blessing and curse, but that they also provided images of eschatological judgment and restoration.

### ***Implications***

James was most likely aware of the eschatological import of Elijah's drought in early Jewish and perhaps early Christian communities. That the eschatological prophet is given as an exemplar for righteous prayer supports the view that James saw his readers as the manifestation of Israel's restoration. The community was to be the locus of repentance, healing and reconciliation, continuing the restoration inaugurated by Israel's Messiah. While James viewed the church as the beginnings of eschatological restoration, he also

acknowledged its subjection to eschatological trial. The church lived in the time between inauguration and fulfillment, facing persecution *from* and compromise *with* the world at enmity with God. As Elijah's drought served as an opportunity for Israel to rid itself of double-minded idolatry, the trials, temptations and sufferings of James' community serve as opportunities to confess sins and heed the call to repentance. Elijah serves as a prophetic paradigm for a community called to be the center of Israel's restoration.

### ***Further Study***

The place of eschatology in James' teaching on prayer needs further systematic study. Scholars have recognized that, "all prayer in the Epistle of James becomes eschatological prayer."<sup>1</sup> Still, a full-length treatment of prayer in James as it relates to the eschatology shown in early Jewish and Christian prayers would be helpful—pulling together James' call to faithful prayer in 1:2–4; 4:4–10 and 5:13–20.

The relation of Elijah to this eschatological prayer may have interesting implications when compared to the prayers of the martyrs—likened to incense—in Revelation 5:8; 6:9–11 and 8:3–5.<sup>2</sup> The martyrs cry, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" (6:10). The martyrs are given white robes and told to "rest a little longer, until the number would be complete" (v. 11). While the answer to their prayers is delayed, their prayers are still effective. The angel takes the fire from the incense of their prayers and pours it upon the earth in judgment (8:3). Could James' mention of Elijah's prayer for drought—a

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, "Finding Yourself an Intercessor: New Testament Prayer from Hebrews to Jude," in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 228–251, see p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> On prayer in the Apocalypse see David Crump, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 269–274; Richard Bauckham, "Prayer in the Book of Revelation," in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 252–271.

reference specifically to God's judgment—reference a similar prayer for God to judge those who are responsible for the community's oppression (2:6; 5:1–6)? Robert J. Karris has noted that the prayer prescribed by James in 5:13 may very well refer to prayers of lament or complaint.<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that James could have also referenced imprecatory prayers?

Furthermore, as mentioned above, James' use of Elijah may have been influenced in part by the Wisdom of Sirach. The connection between James and Sirach has been recognized in the past, concentrating primarily on the teachings of trial and temptation shown in James 1:1–12 and chapters 2 and 15 of Sirach. The relationship between the two books should be the subject of further investigation, especially in light of Sirach's teaching on prayer as it relates to the oppression of the poor (ch. 35) and the restoration of Israel (ch. 36).

Finally, the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy could possibly be expanded beyond the figure of John the Baptist. As mentioned above, Jesus' ministry was patterned after Elijah and Elisha. He even explicitly compares himself to the two prophets in his sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:25–27). John's Revelation describes the prophetic ministry of the church in terms of Elijah as well (11:3–13). Some have even suggested that Paul and even John of Patmos may have seen themselves as Elijah-like figures.<sup>4</sup> Given that James uses Elijah as a model for the church, one wonders if Malachi's promise of Elijah's return can be applied beyond the ministry of the Baptist. There is merit in Verhoef's remarks concerning the messenger of the covenant and Elijah in Malachi 3: "In the dispensation between the first

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<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Karris, "Some New Angles on James 5:13–20," 207–208.

<sup>4</sup> On Paul, see Osvaldo D. Vena, "Paul's Understanding of the Eschatological Prophet of Malachi 4:5–6," *BR* 44 (1999): 35–54; and N. T. Wright, "Paul, Arabia, and Elijah (Galatians 1:17)," *JBL* 115 (1996): 683–692. On John of Patmos see John J. Gunther, "The Elder John, Author of Revelation," *JSNT* 11 (1981): 3–20.

and second comings of Christ, the herald of the day of consummation is essentially the Church through the Word and Spirit of God.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 269.

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## Vita

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